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Cuisine

ISSUE 143 NOVEMBER 2010

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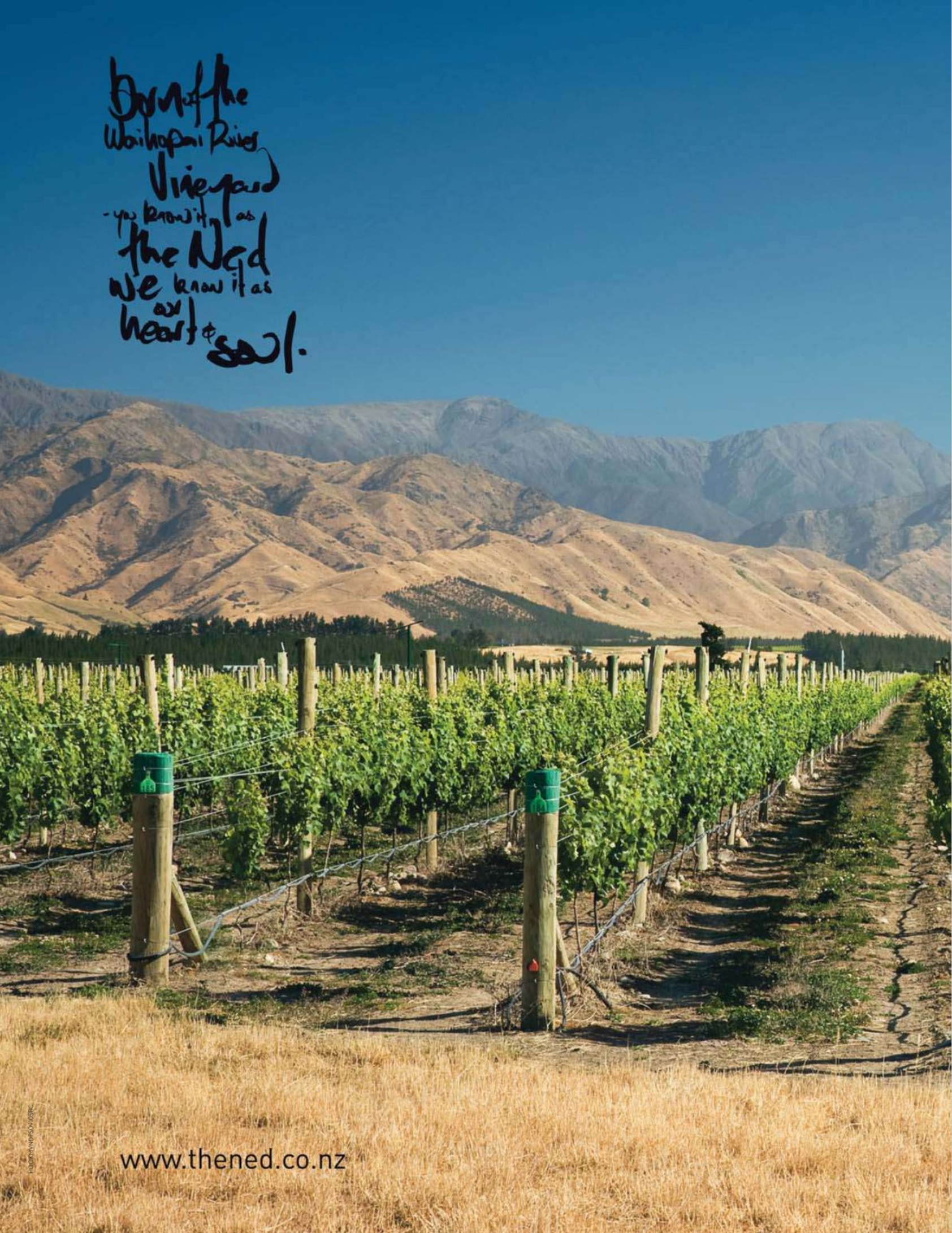
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The *Cuisine* team photographed at Mantells Mt Eden, Auckland. Standing, from left: Fiona Smith, Ray McVinnie, Toni Mason, Sarah Nicholson, Al Brown, Madeleine Kane, William Chen and Celia Harvey. Seated, from left: Tamara West, Kim Netzler and Ginny Grant. Absent, Susan Buchanan

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIERAN SCOTT

Everyone has their own Christmas traditions. Our family was always strictly in the old-school camp, embracing the over-the-top lunch, from just-thawed shrimp cocktails (and Thousand Island dressing from the bottle) to ham, turkey, beef and pavlova with all the trimmings (sound familiar anyone?). Of course, seconds and thirds were obligatory. I once witnessed a cousin's girlfriend arrive at our table a vegetarian of 10 years, only to leave a confirmed carnivore. We seemed to have that effect on people.

Things have slowly changed and younger family members have hosted the big day in their own style, serving different, equally delicious, food and, in so doing, started to create their own traditions.

Whether this is the first Christmas celebration you've hosted or the thirtieth, we have you covered this issue. There are tips and tricks to achieving the perfect turkey, and Ginny Grant's twist on roast lamb, beef and pork. Meanwhile, Celia Harvey serves a sophisticated menu, including ceviche, paella and venison, and Fiona Smith has created extraordinary desserts that, once sampled by your guests, could mean you'll be expected to host Christmas every year, forever.

Plus, Ray McVinnie masterminds weeknight meals destined to become favourites, Al Brown hosts a superb grown-up dinner party and we raise a glass to our best Pinot Noirs, Champagnes and sparklers.

We also have comprehensive food-lovers' guides to two of the best summer destinations – Nelson and Sydney.

Wherever you are this festive period, we hope it's filled with great food and wine, and that it's very happy. Merry Christmas from the *Cuisine* team.

Sarah

Sarah Nicholson

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David Thompson, Farrimond
Photographer Aaron McLean
Food stylist Fiona Smith

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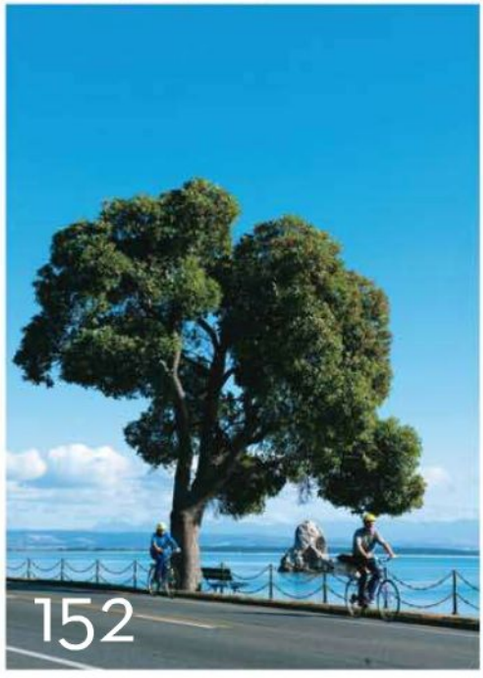
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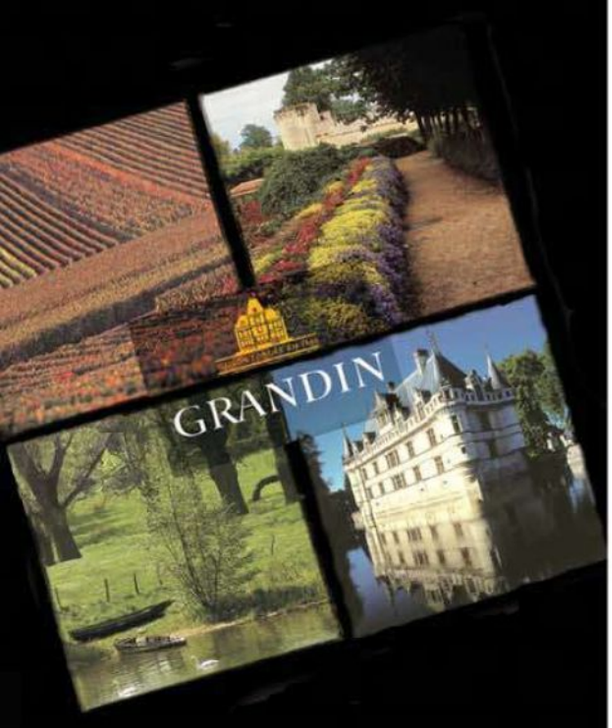
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- *Michael Cooper*



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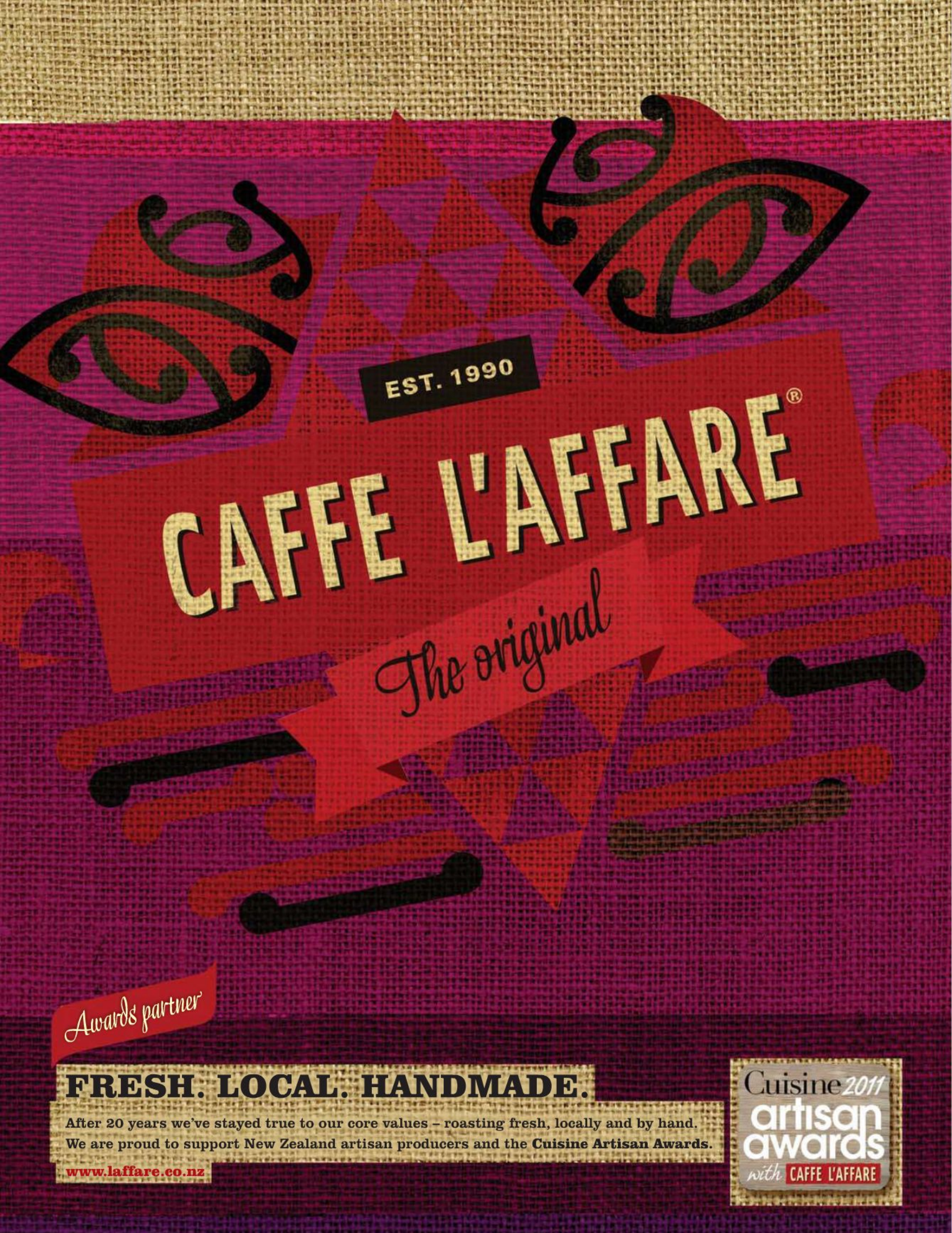
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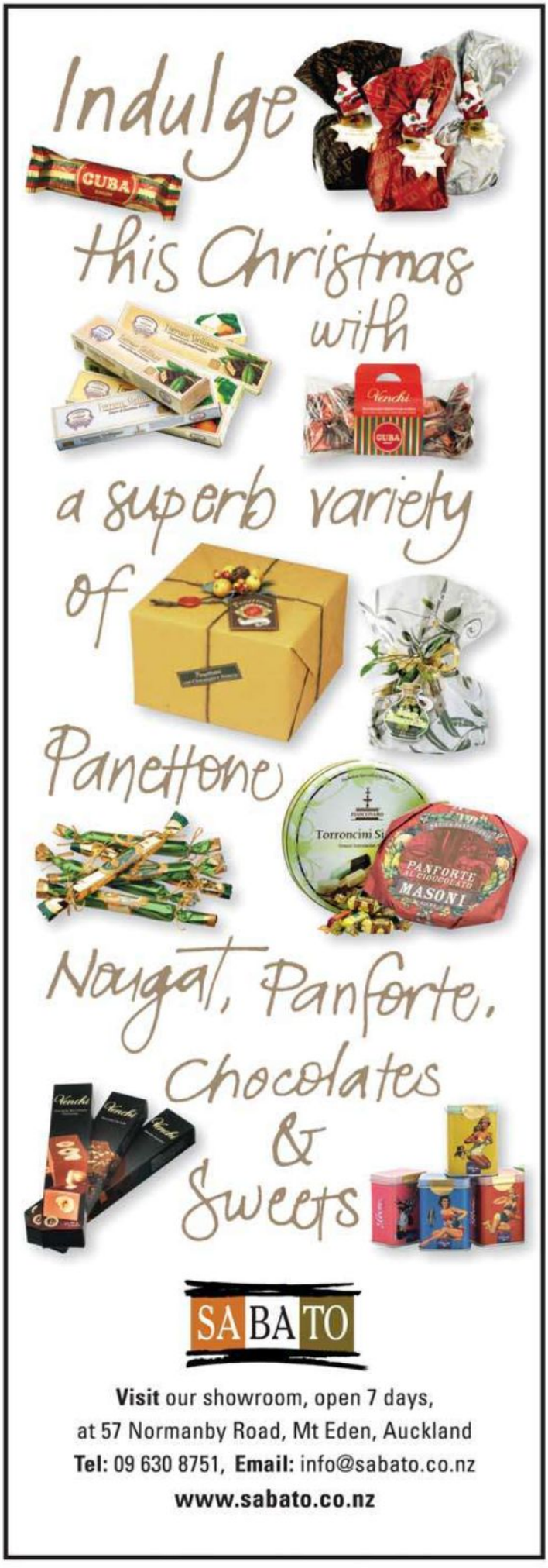
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Subscriptions Stacey Hale, Claire Larsen
Bulk & Corporate Subscription Sales Julie Fraser, ph: 09-909 6830
Subscriptions: One year (6 issues) $40. Two years (12 issues) $80. Three years (18 issues) $115.
One year Australia NZ$60. Elsewhere one year NZ$110.
Freephone: 0800-624 744; freephone: (Australia) 1800-140 329; ph: 09-909 6831; subs@cuisine.co.nz; cuisine.co.nz

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Cuisine is published alternate months by Fairfax Magazines, a division of Fairfax Media. Fairfax Magazines, 317 New North Rd, Kingsland, (PO Box 6341, Wellesley St, Auckland 1141), Auckland 1021, New Zealand. Fairfax Media, Fairfax NZ House, 110 Customs St West, Viaduct, Auckland 1010.
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Cuisine magazine accepts no responsibility for the return or the condition of unsolicited manuscripts, art or photography.
Cuisine is registered with the National Library ISBN: 0113-1206
Printing: PMP Print, Christchurch
Circulation per issue: 55,187 (Source NZ Audited Bureau of Circulation; Total Net Circulation; Jan-Jun 2010)
Readership: 402,000 (Source: Nielsen National Readership Survey Jul 2009-Jun 2010)


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people in the issue

JARED INGERSOLL



Chef, author and advocate for sustainable, ethical and seasonal cuisine, Jared Ingersoll has travelled the world in the course of his career, working in Michelin-starred restaurants in Europe and iconic Australian establishments, before opening his own bistro, Danks Street Depot, eight years ago and, more recently, his fine diner, Cotton Duck (see page 33). Out of the kitchen, Jared is a regular on Australian television programmes and has represented Horticulture Australia and Slow Food Australia at Terra Madre. Jared has fond memories of his childhood home in Wellington's Hutt Valley beside the Hutt River and of tramps through the beautiful bush nearby. It remains, he says, a key influence on his cooking. "There's no medicine like it in the world. That connection with the beauty of nature is something I've always tried to emulate in my cooking." Jared is this issue's guest chef (see page 102).

STEPHEN GOODENOUGH



Stephen Goodenough has a soft spot for Nelson. "I've spent many a long summer day on those beaches and cruising the arts and craft back roads." So naturally he jumped at the chance to photograph the serene, sunny province (see page 152). Unfortunately for Stephen, life has been considerably less tranquil back in his home town. The 1930s building he calls both studio and home is located in the heart of the Christchurch CBD. He was there when the recent earthquake struck – his family and building were shaken but safe – and he walked the streets to record the devastation. Outside, though, it resembled a war zone. "Our street was deserted apart from army and police cordons." Four days later, concerns about a nearby building saw the family of four evacuated "with what we could pack into our cars". Commercial jobs were relocated, food shoots shuffled and a fashion shoot delayed as a client sorted through what was left of her building and garments.

MARK ROPER



Mark Roper is one of Australasia's top food and travel photographers, a job that has seen him eat pig lung soup in Hong Kong, and come under threat from an aggressive elephant in South Africa. He lives in Melbourne with wife Debbie and children Ella and Jack, but always enjoys the chance to shoot in Sydney (see page 142). "It's such a beautiful city visually, especially around the beaches and the harbour." Asked about the age-old debate of which city has the better food scene, Melbourne or Sydney, Mark turns diplomat, "The dining scenes are very different, but equally enjoyable. Melbourne dining seems more casual and relaxed, whereas people in Sydney seem to enjoy dressing up and making a meal more of an event."

JARED INGERSOLL PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK ROPER

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WINNING LETTER

Catherine Bindon has won a five-star Champagne trio from G.H. Mumm – G.H. Mumm Cordon Rouge NV, G.H. Mumm Brut Rosé NV and G.H. Mumm de Cramant NV (see below).

Over many years of reading *Cuisine* I've always been impressed by your ahead-of-the-trends news and educational approach to food. And I've always meant to write in and express my thanks, as so many readers do.

But now I am compelled to write.

I am not vegetarian – I like to eat fish, but I haven't eaten poultry or other meat for 27 years. However, due to *Cuisine*'s mature approach and loving embrace of all foods, I've never been short of exciting new recipes, especially those of Ray McVinnie.

Even so, after 27 years of receiving sideways glances for my food choices you can imagine my thrill and delight when a food hero such as Al Brown, a keen hunter and fisherman, appears in print as a champion of meat-free meals ("No Bones About It", issue 142). I felt strangely validated as I sat there reading those glorious recipes.

Nowadays, when classic Kiwi meat eaters ask me, "Well, what do you eat?" I can reply, "What don't I eat?"

Catherine Bindon, Wellington

> Netball over, I dashed to do the shopping and bought Dux de Lux's Sou' Wester Porter to pair with the flourless chocolate and plum cake

When the September *Cuisine* arrived, I was planning a Saturday night meal and the flourless chocolate and Black Doris plum cake (page 92) leapt out at me. It helped that, as I drove to watch a netball game, Martin Bosley was on the local radio talking about a chocolate cake on his menu, which he was matching with beer. So, netball over, I dashed to do the shopping and bought Dux de Lux's Sou' Wester Porter to pair with the chocolate cake.

To be honest, my cake took longer than 50 minutes to set (nearer 90 – probably all to do with the amount of water in the water bath). But it was fabulous. And paired with the porter it was even better. As one of my guests texted yesterday, "We are still in awe of the cake!" So thanks, *Cuisine*, for another star recipe.

Julia F Davidson, Wellington

I was browsing and cooking my way through the September *Cuisine* when the article by Michal Haines on Chinese food really caught my imagination. The food looked amazing and Michal is an excellent writer. I intend to try all the recipes. Well done.

Nick Turner, via email

After moving to New Zealand from the UK three years ago, I happened upon *Cuisine* one day while waiting in the supermarket checkout queue. I was instantly absorbed. The range of recipes and out-of-the-box thinking is really refreshing and certainly keeps me on my toes in the kitchen.

For me, though, the wine section is where I always turn to first. The recommendations from your wine panels are second to none. Our enjoyment from wine drinking has skyrocketed while our wine budget has stayed firmly on the ground.

This interest has developed into somewhat of an obsession – to the point that I am now retraining from a marine biologist to a winemaker.

So I just wanted to say thank you for guiding me into a career fuelled by a passion for wine. Keep it up.

Daniel Ham, Dunedin

It was good to see Fiona Smith praising butter for the wonderful, natural product it is (issue 142). I recently learned how to make butter and it is very satisfying. With a food mixer it is very easy and 500ml of cream gives about 250g of butter and about 250ml of buttermilk, which you can use in other things. If you want really fresh butter I can't recommend making your own enough.

Colin Woodhouse, Christchurch

■ Due to space restrictions, all these letters have been abridged.

FIVE-STAR CHAMPAGNE

Georges Hermann Mumm had a simple rule when selecting grapes to make his Champagne – "only the best". With 218 hectares of vineyards spread across seven of the top Grand Cru villages in Champagne and a dedication to excellence since its establishment in 1827, it is perhaps no surprise that three G.H. Mumm Champagnes in our tasting in this issue received a maximum five-star rating. The judges described the G.H. Mumm de Cramant NV as "the epitome of the all-Chardonnay Champagne"; the G.H. Mumm Brut Rosé NV as "refined and delicate" and the G.H. Mumm Cordon Rouge NV as "very moreish and long".



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KEN DOWNIE

Baking la différence

The aroma of fresh baking now drifts along Jervois Rd in Auckland's Herne Bay. The source: a small wall-hung Combi oven at new French bakery La Boulange that churns out handmade baguettes and pastries throughout the day. The baked goods at the petite shop run by fiancés Parisian Matthieu Gosset and Kiwi Jess Brewer are rarely more than half an hour old.

"We can't bake too much at a time, so the baking is always fresh – especially in the weekends. People are ordering croissants out of the oven," says Jess. And it's all très Français. The exquisite pastries – croissants, pain au chocolat, pain au raisin, chocolate and custard twists – are made with French butter, the crunchy baguette sandwiches all have French cheeses and the shelves are stocked with French delicacies. And the pastries share counter space with Vaniyé tarts and macaroons by local French pâtissiers.

With evocative black and white photos on the walls and classic café tables on the footpath to complete the picture, La Boulange is a most welcome Gallic outpost.

TONI MASON

La Boulange, 214 Jervois Rd, Herne Bay, Auckland, ph: 09-376 5145

WHAT GOES WITH... CHRISTMAS?

We asked leading chefs from around the globe what they would be serving with drinks this festive season

Seed cake and a glass of Madeira. It's best at 11 o'clock, but good at any time – a symbiotic combination with staying power, which is often needed during the festive season. **FERGUS HENDERSON** St John Bar and Restaurant, London





My favourite winter drink is Pappy Van Winkle 15-year-old bourbon and I'd probably serve it with sliced ham and red-eye gravy (pretty much coffee mayo). **DAVID CHANG** Momofuku, New York

English mince pies made in the form of jiaozi dumplings: I first made them like this for Christmas in Chengdu, China, because there weren't any mince-pie tins around. I'll also be serving roasted cashew nuts coated in a fudgy paste seasoned with chilli and Sichuan pepper. **FUCHSIA DUNLOP** cook and author, London

A platter of all the great raw-milk cheeses we can now get here. Hot-smoked Akaroa salmon seasoned with karengo, and cherry tomatoes dressed in Leccino olive oil from Martinborough.

REX MORGAN Boulcott Street Bistro, Wellington

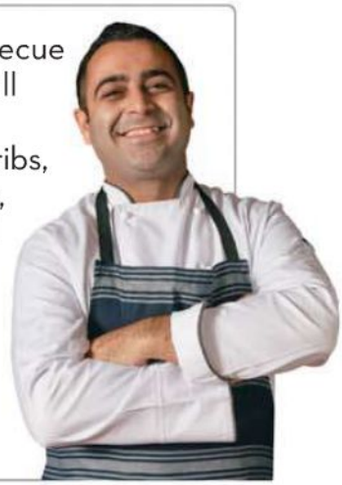


Wedges of ripe new-season stone fruit wrapped in salty prosciutto, lightly grilled on the barbecue, then dressed with extra virgin olive oil and a little good balsamic – the perfect match with Nascetta, beautiful white wine from Piedmont. **BENJAMIN BAYLY** The Grove, Auckland

I love serving arancini from Sicily. Sophisticated enough for the adults, but fun enough that kids dig them, too. They're the perfect appetiser for guests. **MARIO BATALI** chef, author and restaurateur, New York

Tio Point oysters. I do away with the niceties. Outdoor table, white paper for a tablecloth, lemons off our trees and a really good balsamic vinegar. **RUTH PRETTY** Ruth Pretty Catering, Te Horo

I'll have a barbecue and we'll graze all day on crayfish, pork belly, pork ribs, beef, roast duck, plus oysters and cheeses. We eat and drink until we reach our merriest. **SID SAHRAWAT** Sidart, Auckland



A casual barbecue of South American-style street food – cooked over the embers as we feel hungry. The idea came from a fantastic asado in Uruguay last year. On the menu will be raisin, pork and apple empanadas, flatbreads cooked over the coals with grilled provolone and oregano, stuffed baby capsicums, and prawns and scallops on rosemary sticks with romesco sauce. **SARAH GINELLA** Rocco, Auckland





I get a little nostalgic for home and prepare creamed paua and fried bread. My girlfriend is Filipino so we have garlic fried rice and longganisa sausage as well. With those, I serve my authentic caipirinhas and some Riesling.

MORGAN McGLONE Flinders Inn, Sydney

When friends come to Mugaritz at Christmas, some plates we give them are salted anchovies from the Cantabric Sea; bonito belly in olive oil with a little julienned fresh onion; cold meats from local Euskal Txerria pigs; monkfish foie gras from the Porto-Muiños; Basque crab salad; red cardo (thistle) from Navarra. **ANDONI LUIS ADURIZ** Mugaritz, San Sebastián

FERGUS, LAURIE FLETCHER; DAVID, GABRIELE STABILE; SID, KEN DOWNIE; MORGAN, MARK ROPER; BENJAMIN, KEN DOWNIE; SARAH, KIERAN SCOTT



KIWI TO A TEA

What might go into New Zealand's own blend of tea? Twinings held a nationwide competition for the public to decide that very question late last year and the outcome is surprising: New Zealand Breakfast has citrus notes and a distinct smokiness.

Winner Andrew Fenemor of Nelson took 40 attempts to perfect his blend, saying he aimed to evoke the outdoors, birdsong and billy tea brewed over a campfire. Launching the new tea in Wellington, Twinings tea ambassador Stephen Twining described it as the most sophisticated breakfast blend made by the company, but refused to reveal what went into it. (Given the contestants worked only within the Twinings range of nine teas, it doesn't take a tea master to deduce that the smokiness is due to a fair whack of the Lapsang Souchong.)

Food writer Lois Daish fancied she also detected a hint of Russian Caravan and felt this precluded the tea from being considered typically Kiwi – but, then, posh old Twinings could hardly have given Kiwis yet another tarry-black gumboot tea, could they?

The judges also insisted the blend had to be a good milk carrier. ✪ **DAVID BURTON**



RAISING THE BAR



Up your Christmas spirit levels with a tangy **Rhubarb Sour**. Poach some rhubarb with vanilla, orange juice and zest, and brown sugar. Place 3 sticks of poached rhubarb in a shaker and muddle with ½ lemon cut into quarters, then add 10ml Cassis, 10ml calvados, 45ml plain vodka, 60ml rhubarb syrup, 10ml lime juice, plus ice to fill. Shake then strain into a glass filled with ice. Top with a piece of lemon peel and rhubarb. Or pull up a stool where it's made, The Engine Room at Auckland's Northcote Point.



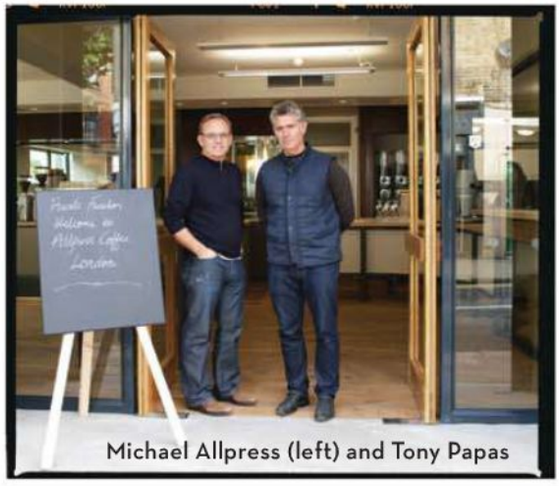
A GOOD FRIEND

Now handmade, buttery Kaimai Havarti is flying out the door. The creamy cheese's mild but tangy flavour and soft but sliceable texture make it a great milder option for the cheeseboard. It doesn't overwhelm other flavours, so it's also a perfect partner for grainy toast, in sandwiches, or tossed through a summer salad of soft greens.
kaimai.co.nz



This petite 50ml bottle of Giusti Il Calamaio di Vittoria gives a sample of the aged balsamic vinegar from the esteemed Modena house and makes a great stocking filler. $26.90, sabato.co.nz

Dine Aid begins 1 November. When participating restaurants ask to add $2 to your bill, say yes! All proceeds go to the City Missions. Learn more at dineaid.org.nz



Michael Allpress (left) and Tony Papas

London calls for Allpress

Pioneering coffee roaster Allpress Espresso has ventured beyond Down Under. On 1 October it opened a café and roastery in the heart of East London's fashionable Shoreditch.

London's café scene is dominated by chains like Starbucks but, with a growing trend of independents, managing director Michael Allpress has his eye on the wholesale market. "This flagship will be a working billboard," says Allpress.

Chef Tony Papas – of Sydney's Bayswater Brasserie fame – who has overseen Allpress in Australia for the past 10 years, now heads the UK operation. Along with the coffees, the café has high-end sandwiches, pastries and mixed plates.

Above the café, Allpress is offering barista training. Kiwi baristas have much cachet in London – many cafés advertise their Antipodean-trained baristas. With Allpress joining the scene, it looks like café colonisation. **Allpress Espresso, 58 Redchurch St, Shoreditch, London, ph: 020-7749 1780, allpressespresso.com**

TEA, CHEESE AND BALSAMIC: JASON CREAGHAN; COCKTAIL: KEN DOWNIE; CUP AND SAUCER FROM ANTIQUE ALLEY, ANTIQUEALLEY.CO.NZ

THE IDEAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

Cuisine wine country 2011















The world's best drink magazine is now even better

The new 300-page edition of our award-winning **Cuisine Wine Country**, the biggest ever, is due out **8 November**. It's the ultimate guide to exploring New Zealand's wine regions, with the latest on winery cellar doors, restaurants and cafés, farmers' markets and artisan producers, plus the best in regional dining, accommodation, activities and sights. Food and wine itineraries are suggested in each region.

With its unrivalled coverage of New Zealand's exciting wine country, this biennial bible provides invaluable insights into our ever-expanding winery scene for international and domestic visitors alike.

Don't leave home without it.

ORDER NOW AND SAVE

Cuisine Wine Country 2011 is on sale from 8 November in all good bookstores and supermarkets. Be in first and save – *Cuisine* subscribers can pre-order for **$14.50** (RRP $17.90 incl GST) at **mags4gifts.co.nz/cuisine-special-gifts**

On sale in Australia (RRP $A14.90) from 19 November.
For stockists see **cuisine.co.nz/winecountry**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIERAN SCOTT. ASIDE FROM WAIKATO FARMERS' MARKET AND PICNICKING AT MATAWHERO WINES

✱ **Cuisine Wine Country 2009**, Winner, Best Drink Magazine, 2010 Le Cordon Bleu World Food Media Awards



KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

PASCAL BEDEL

As the busy chef-patron of Le Canard in Wellington, Pascal Bedel doesn't cook at home as often as he might like. When he does, it's family cuisine – salads and barbecues in summer and, in winter, typically a big pot of boeuf bourguignon, which tastes even better when wife Ophélie reheats it for them and their two children the next day.

Pascal describes his three-year-old son Sasha as fussy, but Jade, his nine-year-old, is such a budding food fiend, she has to be restrained in the kitchen. That way, Pascal wryly points out, he isn't forced to taste her experimental "pâtisserie", such as leftover bread, eggs and milk baked in a terrine dish.

But what Frenchman wouldn't be proud of such a daughter, who does school projects about international chefs and considers the smellier the cheese the better – and even eats the rind? Best of all, Jade is prepared to try anything once, even if she does not like it.

Unlike Wellington-born Sasha, Jade grew up in the forest in the Dordogne, in south-west France, five kilometres from the nearest neighbour and with a home vegetable garden, a pig that was slaughtered and replaced each year, and a father who returned from the woods with baskets of freshly picked girolles, cèpes and trompettes de la morte.

Pascal and Ophélie had bought a hotel-restaurant in the Dordogne, but winters were so quiet, the business became too hard. Emigration seemed the solution and they were impressed by Kiwis they'd met – neighbours Dan and Anna Tait-Jamieson from Wellington and Dunedin's Roger Belton, the husband of Pascal's landlady, whom he first met emerging from the forest, carrying a basket of cèpes.

"It's a small world," says Pascal. For as the owner of Southern Clams in Dunedin, Roger supplies the molluscs that Pascal serves in tumblers with a jug of crayfish bouillon, powdered bisque and lemongrass pea panna cotta. **DAVID BURTON**

WE FANCY



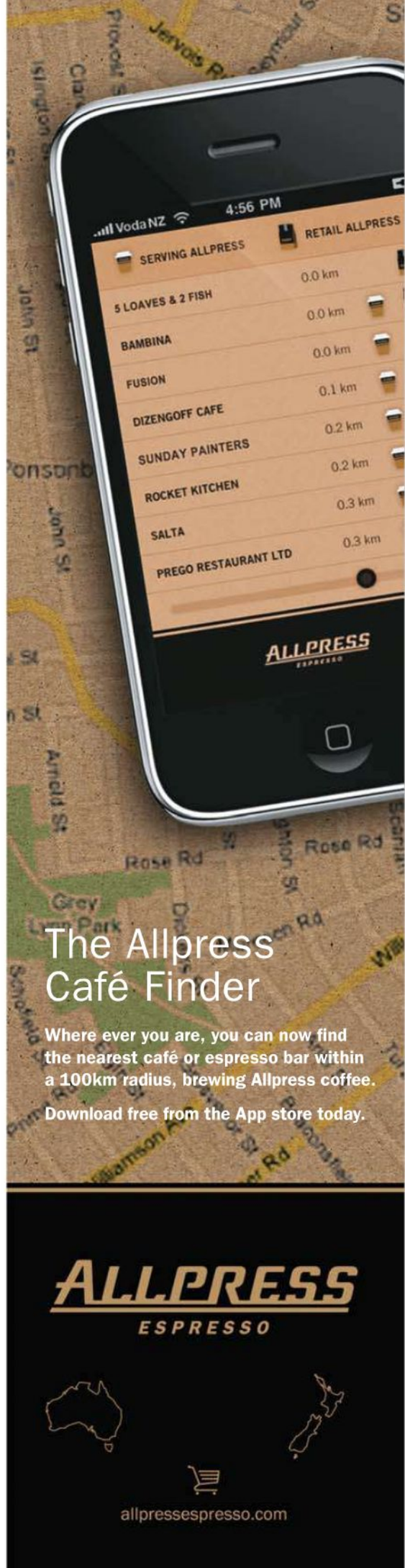
- Punnets of fresh pomegranate seeds, at specialist greengrocers and good supermarkets – see recipes on pages 64 and 82.
- The Kaiwaka Cheese Shop, purveyors of fine Dutch and local cheeses, celebrating 21 years this December. cheese-shop.co.nz
- Due North hand-crafted preserves, sauces and chutneys like the Fire-Eaters' Chilli Chutney made with manuka-smoked Kaitaia chillies.
- Loaf doughnuts made by chef Sean Armstrong and his team – choose from berry, chocolate and apple. Available at Nosh Food Markets.



GIVEAWAY 'Tis the season of giving and in this spirit Absolut Vodka is launching the limited-edition Absolut Glimmer gift pack. Included is a 700ml bottle of vodka in glam crystal-like glass, an Absolut cocktail guide and Absolut keyring-cum-bar tool. We have two packs to give away, thanks to Absolut.

TO ENTER email competitions@cuisine.co.nz, putting Absolut Glimmer in the subject line, by 13 December.

PORTRAIT, NICOLA EDMONDS; POMEGRANATE, ANDREA BRICCO / GETTY IMAGES





in season
GREEN BEANS

GREEN BEANS (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), also known as French, snap or string beans, are the tender, unripe pods of this this species. Shelling beans, such as pinto, borlotti, black beans, are in the same family, but the beans are extracted from the pods, which aren't eaten.

Haricots verts are particularly long, thin and tender, while large, coarse-skinned scarlet runner beans are a different species (*Phaseolus coccineus*).

Look for beans that are small (they are sweeter), brightly coloured, with no bruises or brown patches. They should feel crisp – not bendy. If you can see the bean swelling through the pod it's a sign that the bean will be old and tough. Store in plastic bags in the vegetable drawer – ideally not longer than two or three days.

Older varieties had a tough "string" down the sides, which usually had to be removed. Modern varieties have had this element bred out of them, though flat beans often need to be de-stringed. Top and tail the beans before cooking.

The classical way to cook beans so they retain their vibrant colour is as follows. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, salt generously, add the beans, bring back to the boil and cook for 3-5 minutes, depending on age and variety. Test a bean if in doubt. Ideally, beans should be just beyond the crunch but still tender to the bite.

Drain and plunge the beans into iced water – don't leave in too long, otherwise the beans will taste watery. Drain and dry on a clean tea towel. For buttered beans, heat butter in a sauté pan (you may like to fry some garlic, bacon or nuts first), add the beans, cook until heated through (2-3 minutes), season with salt and pepper, and serve.

Beans discolour quickly once an acidic ingredient such as citrus juice or vinegar is added, so if you are dressing beans warm to be served later, leave out the acid ingredients in the dressing and toss through the beans just before serving.

- Make a dressing with yoghurt, garlic, chives and mint or dill – allow the beans to cool slightly before dressing.
- Stir-fry with garlic, ginger and spring onions. Drizzle with soy sauce and sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds.
- Serve in a salade Niçoise.
- Slow-cook Italian style by blanching beans briefly then stewing in tomato sauce made with garlic, chilli and basil, until soft and tender. **GINNY GRANT**

On their own, with a cocktail, or as the killer kick in a sumptuous dessert, Griottines kirsch-macerated Morello cherries are the epitome of indulgence, from $17.40 for 57g. mercato.net.nz



STOCKING FILLERS

Valrhona's Equinoxe Candied Orange Peel and Dark Chocolate Almonds and Hazelnuts come in handy 75g tins, ideal for gift hampers. And perhaps for reformed smokers, the Venchi chocolate cigars filled with caramelised hazelnuts might offer sweet consolation. **sabato.co.nz**



BEANS, AARON McLEAN; PRODUCT SHOTS, JASON CREAGHAN

SURVEYOR THOMSON

Detail of original map of Central Otago, Mr Surveyor Thomson, 1858



SURVEYOR THOMSON WINES

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To drink our pinot noir is to experience the rich history of Central Otago."

David Hall-Jones, Owner

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Win a year's supply of lamb, delivered to your door!



Spring has arrived, bringing with it the most tender, juicy lamb. By dining in one of more than 160 New Zealand Beef and Lamb Hallmark of Excellence restaurants nationwide during November, **you can win a year's supply of lamb from Gourmet Direct, delivered to your home each month.**

Simply choose a delicious main course meal of spring lamb from the menu, and you go in the draw to win gourmet lamb at home all year round.

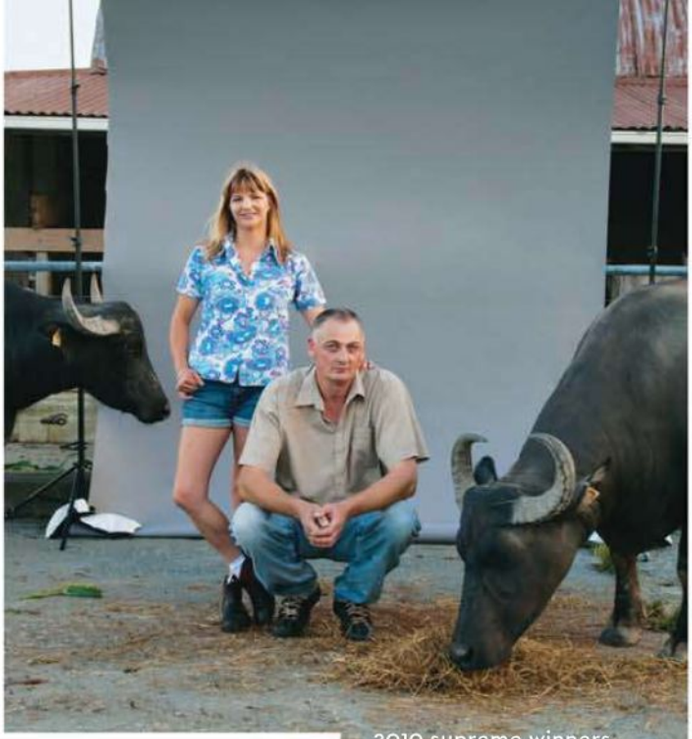
For a list of all the participating restaurants nationwide, please visit www.beeflambnz.co.nz

Promotion valid 1st to 30th November 2010. See the entry form or visit www.beeflambnz.co.nz for full Terms and Conditions. For more information, contact Beef + Lamb New Zealand on freephone 0800 733 466 or email enquiries@beeflambnz.co.nz.

Lamb fillet roasted with prosciutto, grilled artichoke and handmade linguini, by Brenton Low, à Deco, Whangarei, holder of the 2010 Beef and Lamb Hallmark of Excellence.

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2010 supreme winners, Helen and Richard Dorresteyn of Clevedon Valley Buffalo Company









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After 20 years in the business, we at Caffe L'affare are proud to have never strayed from our core values – roasting fresh, locally and by hand. It takes real determination to ensure a no-compromises approach when a business is growing exponentially. Taking a small-scale business to the next level can be the most critical and stressful stage for any producer. We hope these awards, and our support, will help even more artisan producers to take that leap.

Cuisine 2011 artisan awards with CAFFE L'AFFARE

CALLING ALL FOOD FANATICS

We're on the hunt for New Zealand's best artisan products for the **Cuisine Artisan Awards 2011** in association with Caffe L'affare

We are excited at the prospect of finding new producers to champion through our popular awards and we would like your help. We'd like you to tell us about your favourite artisan product – it could be a baked item; specialty chocolate; fruit drink; condiment or preserve; dairy, seafood or meat product – but, whatever it is, it must show added value.*

We consider an artisan producer to be someone who applies their skills to making individually crafted goods, generally on a small scale and often according to traditional practices. The growth in artisan goods in this country has made a very positive impact on the range of quality New Zealand produce.

For past winners, the impact on their business has been huge. Last year's supreme winner, Clevedon Valley Buffalo Company's buffalo yoghurt, clearly whetted appetites. "The accolade has brought our yoghurt to the attention of many more people throughout the country and, given that we are limited by the size of our herd, we are yet to meet demand," says co-owner Helen Dorresteyn.

TO NOMINATE

To nominate an artisan product or products, email Tamara West at tam@cuisine.co.nz by 12 November, with Artisan Awards in the subject line, or write to *Cuisine* Artisan Awards, PO Box 37349, Parnell, Auckland 1151.

* Unprocessed primary produce is not eligible. Also, a number of artisan products have their own industry awards and for this reason we are not taking entries for beer, cheese, olive oil or coffee products.

PORTRAIT, KEN DOWNIE; BREAD, KIERAN SCOTT; ICE-CREAM & BUTTER, AARON McLEAN; FIGS, NIGEL GARDINER

Battle of the beer

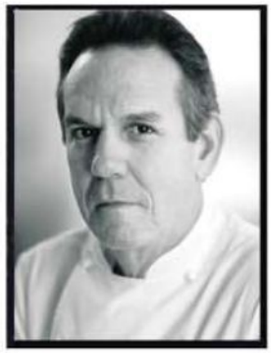
As consumers vote with their dollar for small-scale craft beers with flavour, and the drink finally reaches white tablecloth settings, so the brewing industry seeks to challenge the traditional affinity between wine and food.

Wellington's Beervana Festival this year featured "Beer vs Wine, the Tussle for the Table" in which caterer Ruth Pretty provided six courses, each matched with a beer and a wine. Consumers were asked to vote on the best matches.

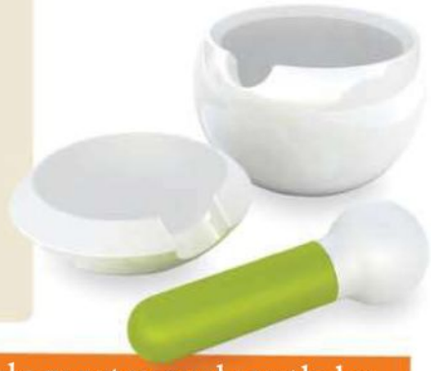
Being stacked with beer supporters, it was obvious that the vote would favour the beers, and it's true that the malty, very subtly hopped Dux Brewing Co's Hereford Bitter flattered a confit of pork belly with white beans, rainbow chard and prunes. But how was an excessively hopped, too-bitter pilsner better than méthode traditionnelle for a delicate duck liver parfait, or an India pale ale (IPA) better than a Syrah with steak and kidney pie?

"With all due respect," *Cuisine* wine writer John Saker told the audience, "that IPA should have stayed in India. A vindaloo would have been perfect." Sacred Hill chief winemaker Tony Bish added that the IPA was so hoppy, you might as well have called it Bugs Bunny.

"There are some great beers here tonight," Bish concluded. "It's just a shame they don't go with food." **DAVID BURTON**



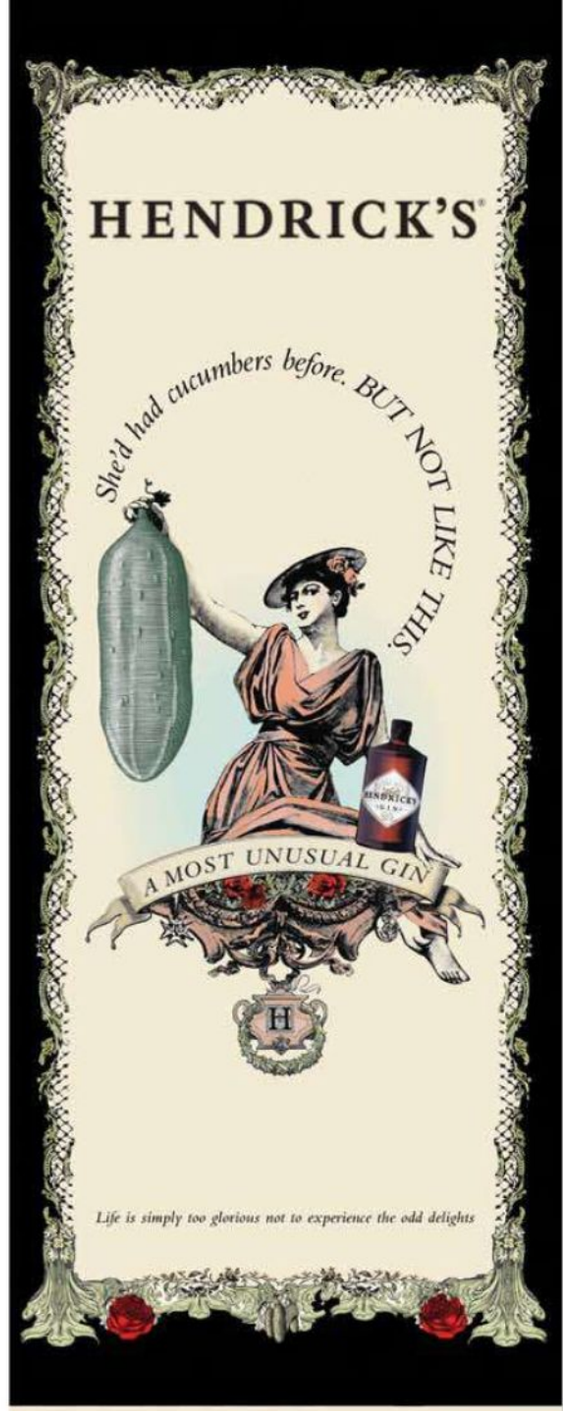
THREE WISE MEN The Farm at Cape Kidnappers will host a dinner extraordinaire in March 2011. The 3 Chefs Dinner will see Heston Blumenthal (The Fat Duck), Neil Perry (Rockpool) and Thomas Keller (The French Laundry; pictured) combine to present a six-course dinner featuring two signature dishes from each, matched to Dry River Wines. Minimum stay three nights. **capekidnappers.com**



Meet the Orb, a porcelain double mortar and pestle by Joseph and Joseph. From Living & Giving, RRP $69.99

TRAFFIC

- Auckland's **FARRO FRESH** opens a new store in Constellation Dr on the North Shore in late October – with French breads and croissants baked on-site and a Bennetts of Mangawhai in-store chocolaterie.
- Classy caterers Mantells has opened a new venue, **MANTELLS ON THE WATER**, at Auckland's Westhaven.
- Antonio Cacace has sold The Terrace branch of his **LA BELLA ITALIA** in Wellington, which is to be re-launched with a French-Italian theme.
- Chef David Coleman has returned to Wellington and bought Newtown's **EATERIA DE MANON** from Manni Hunt.
- A new contemporary Asian eatery, **ANCESTRAL,** is to open in Wellington's Courtenay Place. Bar design guru Allistar Cox is doing the fitout.
- The $7-million revamp of Miramar's old Capitol Court cinema into a 1930s-style picture house called **ROXY THEATRE** will include a restaurant run by Valentina Dias of Café Polo.
- Fleur Sullivan, of Fleur's Place at Moeraki (see page 166), will open **THE LOAN AND MERC** bar and restaurant, based on the principles of slow food, in the Victorian Loan and Mercantile building in the historic quarter of Oamaru in mid-November.





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diary dates

DECEMBER

15-19 **FEAST OF CANTERBURY** Finale in the grounds of Riccarton House in a grand marquee (postponed from September due to earthquake). Includes Beertopia, the gala dinner, twilight market and masterclasses. Existing tickets still valid, ph: 03-348 6190, feastofcanterbury.co.nz

NOVEMBER

6 **HUNTER'S GARDEN MARLBOROUGH DÉGUSTATION GALA DINNER**, ph: 0800-627 527, gardenmarlborough.com

6-7 **MANDERLEY HOME & GARDEN FESTIVAL**, 3875 Christchurch-Akaroa Hwy. Gourmet food, wine, beer and music. Ph: 03-325 1156, manderley.co.nz

13 **SAVOURING THE SOURCE** at Waimate North Showgrounds celebrates Northland food and wine. Ph: 09-405 9846, bayofislandsshow.co.nz

13 **Kai in the Bay** Inaugural celebration of Maori and wild food (including huhu grubs, weka, titi, whitebait and parengo) at Napier's Perfume Point Reserve in Ahuriri. Alcohol- and smoke-free. Ph: 06-873 7134, kaiinthebay.co.nz

13 **REBECCA GIBB'S WINE WORKSHOP** A relaxed afternoon, eating and drinking your way around the world at Ponsonby's Long Room in Auckland (also 4 December). *Cuisine* readers can get a second ticket at half-price for booking before 1 November. rebeccagibb.com

13-14 **CLEVEDON A&P SHOW** at Clevedon Showgrounds has a wine and food enclosure with jazz band. Ph: 09-239 2993, clevedonshow.co.nz

18-21 **TASTE OF AUCKLAND** at the new venue of Victoria Park. Top restaurants, more than 100 food and beverage producers, and entertainers in a festival atmosphere. tasteofauckland.co.nz

20-21 **WAIHEKE OLIVE FESTIVAL** Join the island growers at Rangihoua Estate to celebrate the harvest. waihekeolivefestival.co.nz

JANUARY

22 **MEANDERING VINEYARD LUNCH** in and around Martinborough. Through four family-owned vineyards, transport provided. Ph: 0800-671 770.

FEBRUARY

12 **2011 MARLBOROUGH WINE FESTIVAL** at Brancott Vineyard Tickets are on sale now so be quick, as this is always sold out. Ph: 03-577 9299, ticketdirect.co.nz, marlboroughwinefestival.co.nz



STEAK WITH GREEN PEPPERCORN SAUCE

Prep: 10 minutes • Cook: 15 minutes • Serves: 4



4 thick cut (4cm) eye fillet beef steaks
salt and ground black pepper
4 tsp butter
¼ cup port
2 heaped tbsp green peppercorns
250g Essential Cuisine Beef Jus

This impressive looking dinner is perfect for last-minute entertaining.

Tie a piece of string around the circumference of each steak to hold them tight. Season steaks with salt and pepper and place a tsp of butter on each.

Preheat a heavy frypan over high heat. Place steaks in pan butter side down and brown well for a minute on each side. Remove from pan and transfer to a shallow baking tray, lined with baking paper.

Return the pan used for browning the steaks to the heat without cleaning. Add the port and stir to deglaze the pan brownings. Add the green peppercorns and Essential Cuisine Beef Jus. Bring to a simmer. Taste and adjust seasonings. Sauce can be reheated as needed.

When ready to serve, heat oven to 220°C and roast steaks for 7 minutes, or until done to your liking.

Stand for 3-5 minutes before serving. Accompany steaks with hot green peppercorn sauce and serve with mashed potato and lightly cooked green vegetables.

Recipe by Annabel Langbein

Look for us in the cold shelf or butchery department in leading supermarkets and fine food outlets or go to **www.essentialcuisine.co.nz**



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KENWOOD

CREATE MORE



Steven Skelly (left) and Greg Doyle

Sea change at Pier

After grabbing headlines by renouncing his three-hat status in last year's *Good Food Guide*, Pier's Greg Doyle has a new head chef and a new(-ish) menu – though the 270-degree water views and super seafood focus remain. Steven Skelly – a Pier alumnus – now oversees a simplified and slightly cheaper menu (in the $40s for a main). The Sunday fish 'n' chips are a winner at $35 a head. (This year's awards gave Pier one chef's hat.) **pierrestaurant.com.au**



Cotton Duck

INGERSOLL'S NEW ROOST Smack in the middle of the rag-trade area, in a building that once acted as a duck roost, is Cotton Duck, Jared Ingersoll's new Surry Hills opening. The Sydney-based Kiwi is joined in this funked-up recycled space by Penny Williams, formerly of Ingersoll's Danks Street Depot, whose years in Bali are evident in her kretek-smoked salmon terrine and Bali-spiced cobia rolls. **danksstreetdepot.com.au**

RUSH TO REDFERN There's no stopping the creeping coolness of inner-city neighbourhoods. The latest to go off is Redfern, thanks in part to **Eat House Diner**. It's a homey spot (Americana meets comfort food) with fish pie, lamb shanks and banana splits. The sign says "Eat Here" and locals queue obediently. Other cosy Redfern hangs include **Baffi and Mo** café (ph: 02-8065 3294), unfailingly packed out for breakfast and burgers; **Quirk's Grocery Deli** (ph: 02-9690 1166) and the **Saint Germain Pâtisserie** (ph: 02-9319 7161). **eathousediner.com.au**





Porteño

PORTENTS GOOD FOR PORTEÑO

The rockabilly-quiffed Bodega boys have a second, grown-up restaurant in Porteño, a sexy, 110-seater – plus bar – on Cleveland St, Surry Hills. Pony skins, roughcast plaster, vintage tiles and *Evita* posters transform the space into a slice of Buenos Aires, right down to the charcoal grill. With a menu of empañadas, chimichurri, slow, slow, slow-roasted Suffolk lamb and suckling pig, it's carnivore heaven. Named for the natives of Buenos Aires, Porteño is Sydney's hottest opening this year. **porteno.com.au**

Chinese theatre

New-look, regionally influenced Chinese is another Sydney trend to watch and it ain't happening in Chinatown. From the gang behind dumpling franchise Din Tai Fung – where you watch dumplings being rolled, stuffed and pleated as you queue to eat – comes more predinner theatre. This time it's a row of pristinely clad, dough-twirling noodle-makers at Chefs Gallery on George St. Try noodles fried with shredded pork and black fungus, and cute red bean and sesame-flavoured dessert dumplings. More dumplings have popped up among the cafés, delis and bars of Potts Point at Fei Jai ("fat boy"), a slim, dark spot connected to Melbourne's first family of fine Cantonese, the Laus. Rave reviews for the siumai and crab omelette. **chefsgallery.com.au, feijai.com**



Chefs Gallery

JOANNA SAVILL

PIER, MARK ROPER; COTTON DUCK, MAJA BASKA


Mahjong Black

Mahjong's winning hand There's more new classy Cantonese in the CBD, courtesy of Mahjong Black in Little Collins St, sibling restaurant to St Kilda favourite Mahjong. Owner Max Tsang is behind the Manhattan fit-out and a menu that combines the tried and true (excellent Peking duck) with decidedly modern interpretations. Ph: 03-9650 8873

ESPOSITO'S NEW TESTAMENT

Maurice Esposito – whose eponymous flagship seafood restaurant can be found in Carlton – has joined the ranks of Melbourne chefs opening second-string restaurants. Tucked down a CBD alleyway, St Peter's – named for the distinctive mark on his favourite fish, John Dory – has sustainable seafood all round, and a punchy list of bar snacks for the drinkers downstairs. But don't expect a reprise of the French-leaning Esposito. "I'm going towards my Italian roots," he says. **espositofood.com**


Flower Drum

MARCHING TO A NEW BEAT

After 25 years, one of Melbourne's most venerable dining institutions, Flower Drum, has had a timely revamp: the menu has been radically streamlined and chef-owner Anthony Lui has been getting his inventive groove on with wild barramundi fillets turned into wonderfully elastic noodles and stuffed garfish served with a deep and soulful shiitake broth. **flower-drum.com**



Town Hall Hotel

TALK OF THE TOWN Melbourne's Italian heart is beating that much quicker with the return of Harry Lilai, the former executive chef at fine-diner Cecconi's who has taken over Fitzroy's Town Hall Hotel. He has restored the name (until recently it was Griffs Wine Pub) and introduced his signature menu of gutsy, rustic yet evolved Italian food. From classics such as veal carpaccio and baccalà with soft polenta to his signature quail with chorizo and red grapes, he shows up the mediocrity of so many of the city's Italian restaurants. And, dare we say it, it's very affordable, too. A gem. **townhallhotel.net.au**

OUT OF THE BOX Sexy laneway restaurant-bar hybrids are a dime a dozen in this town, but Pandora's Box offers more than just good looks. The former lingerie factory has been turned into a swish, seductive space of cool tiles with a central bar courtesy of Steve Boyle (who also owns nearby seminal Chapel St café Orange) and a stunning wine list courtesy of sommelier Lok Thornton. The food of chef Matthew Germanchis stands out from the share-plate crowd with singular takes on well-trod Mediterranean territory. The must-tries? The salt-cod scotch eggs and his duck jamón with roasted quince. **orangewindsor.com**



LARISSA DUBECKI

TOWN HALL HOTEL, JOSIE WITHERS PHOTOGRAPHY

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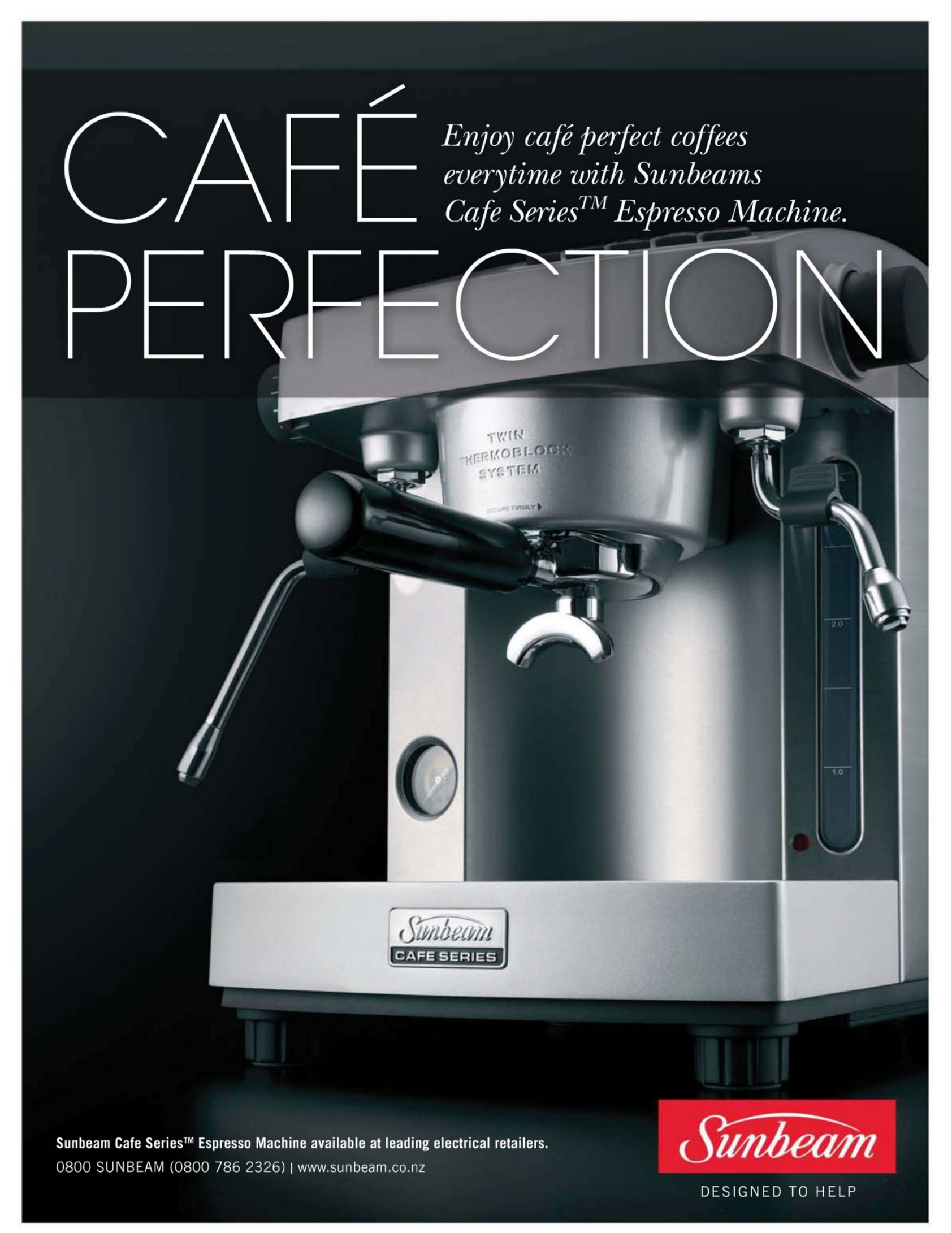
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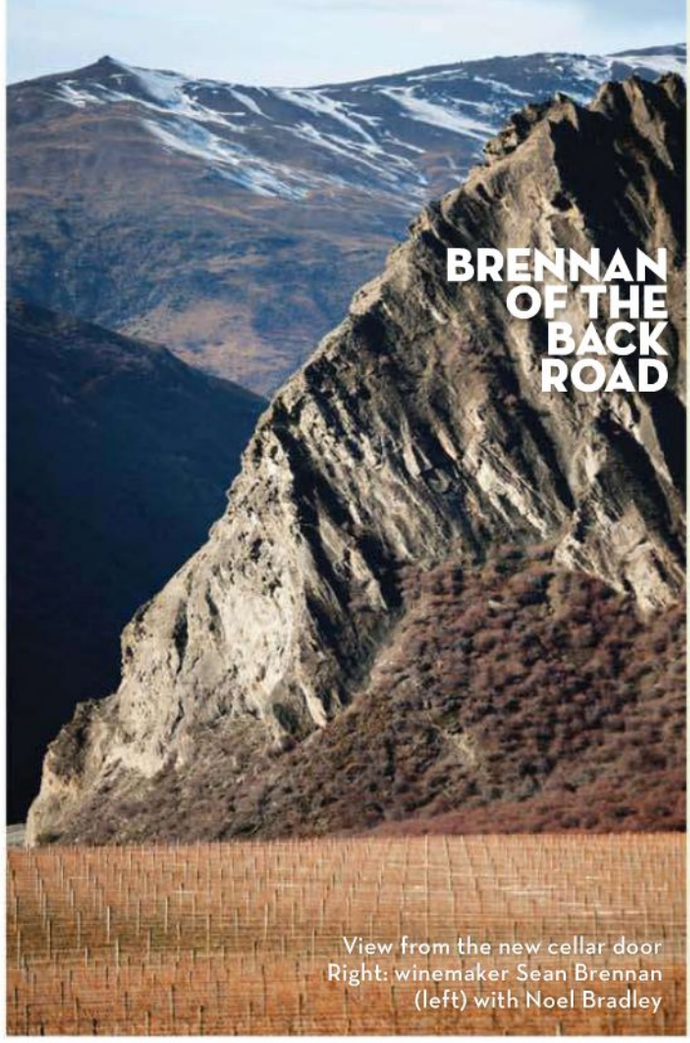
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Fashioned locally

It smells like Pinot Noir, tastes like Pinot with an endearingly feral twist and sounds like a French fashion statement. It is St Laurent, a red grape that is a Pinot offspring but now resides mostly in Austria. Central Otago winery Judge Rock has just achieved the southern hemisphere's largest commercial release of the variety with the 2009 vintage. Says Judge Rock's Paul Jacobsen: "We're very happy with it – it's certainly something different."



BRENNAN OF THE BACK ROAD

View from the new cellar door
Right: winemaker Sean Brennan (left) with Noel Bradley

Up on the long straight of the Gibbston Back Rd in Central Otago's Gibbston Valley, Brennan Wines has opened its new cellar door. Simplicity and elegance mark the tasting room interior, where an open fire and the knowledgeable Noel Bradley provide a warm welcome. There's pétanque, beautiful views, a path through the vines to outdoor seating, and a children's play area. Perfect for summer picnics. And the Pinot Noir is a must-taste.



In the hushed confines of London's Hospital Club, Ata Rangi winemaker Helen Masters recently presented her wines to British wine scribe Jancis Robinson MW. Two words made Masters' trip: "Really impressive."

THE FERMENT

Remember the 1993 vintage? The fallout from the eruption of Mt Pinatubo in the Philippines made ripening grapes very difficult. However, the year wasn't all bad for New Zealand wine. Consider Lincoln's oenology degree 1993 graduating class, which included **JOHN KAVANAGH** (Neudorf), **SAM HARROP MW** (international consultant winemaker), **DEAN SHAW** (Central Otago Wine Company), **DUNCAN FORSYTH** (Mount Edward), **RHYAN WARDMAN** (Indevin) and **JULES TAYLOR** (Jules Taylor).

Birthday season is upon us. Three decades have passed since **DANIEL LE BRUN** planted his first vines in Marlborough with the idea of making bubbles to rival those of his native Champagne. Le Brun and wife Adele of No 1 Family Estate are using the occasion to release their Cuvée Virginie 2006 (named after their daughter), which earned five stars in our sparkling tasting (see page 117). It's an occasion in itself – just the third release since 1997. As **CLOUDY BAY** celebrates its silver season – 25 vintages – its newly released 2010 Sauvignon Blanc marches the quality of its 24 famous forebears. Further south, Central Otago winery **OLSSENS** is celebrating its 21st. Back in 1991, the planting of Olssens' first vineyard marked the first grapes in the ground in Bannockburn.

SPOT OF BOTHER? TRY THIS...

Gone are the days of living with red wine spills. From rings on tablecloths to restaurant mishaps, Wine Away safely attacks red wine stains on all fabrics. This non-toxic, biodegradable spray comes in two sizes ($23 and $16), as well as lipstick-style sprays in a useful handbag-size emergency kit ($23). **brightidea.co.nz**





Heartfelt venture

For a liquid cardio-massage, head to Auckland's newest cellar door. Corazon (Spanish for heart) Wines has converted a space in its large, industrial winery building at 393 Henderson Valley Rd in the foothills of the Waitakere Ranges into an attractive tasting room. Experienced winemaker-proprietor Shayne Cox (left) sources top fruit from around the country to make his Corazon wines, which are available for tasting and sale at the cellar door.

JOHN SAKER

BRENNAN WINERY, KIERAN SCOTT; ST LAURENT BOTTLE, JASON CREAGHAN



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quick smart

Ray McVinnie makes light work of sides for festive mains

Traditional vegetable sides for the festive season often involve a battery of pots cluttering up the stove or more roasting pans filling the oven – so annoying when you are trying to manage the sometimes challenging job of providing festive main courses as well. I generally try for one or two more easily handled dishes of whatever is in season – which is even easier when done on large platters. Many people prefer festive food such as a meat roast with traditional Antipodean accompaniments of roasted or boiled vegetables, but if you want something a bit different, try a couple of these vegetable dishes and salads.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY McVINNIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



WARM POTATO & TOMATO SALAD Place plenty of boiled new **potatoes** in a large bowl, lightly crush with a fork and add ripe **tomatoes** cut into wedges, sliced **semidried** or **sundried tomatoes**, finely chopped **red onion**, chopped **roasted almonds**, **rocket leaves** and lots of **mint** and **basil leaves**. Dress with **extra virgin olive oil** and **white wine vinegar** then serve warm. Good with ham, beef, chicken and lamb.

BAKED EGGPLANT WITH WALNUTS, GARLIC BREADCRUMBS & VINEGAR Slice lots of **eggplant** about 2cm thick and brush with plenty of **olive oil**. Barbecue until well browned on both sides or bake side by side on baking sheets in a 200°C oven until browned on both sides (turn them halfway through cooking). Pile on to a serving plate and drizzle with **red wine vinegar** and sprinkle with chopped toasted **walnuts**, fresh **breadcrumbs** that have been fried with chopped **garlic** in **olive oil** until crisp and **parsley** sprigs. Good with lamb or turkey.

BAKED EGGPLANT & TOMATO Fry lots of chopped **onions**, **garlic**, finely chopped **rosemary** and **anchovies**. Place in an even layer in the bottom of a shallow gratin dish. Cover with rows of thinly sliced **eggplant** and pour in plenty of **tomato passata**. Bake in a hot oven until bubbling and well browned. Serve with a liberal dusting of freshly grated **parmesan**. Good with lamb or chicken.

▲ **STEAMED VEGETABLES WITH RICOTTA** Place halved **baby fennel**, halved **radishes** and halved **baby turnips** (or a mix of sliced large vegetables) in a steamer and steam until just tender. Add **green beans** and **peas**, and steam a further few minutes (alternatively, blanch all in stages in boiling water). Serve tossed with **ricotta**, **capers**, **parsley** and finely diced **preserved lemon peel** and drizzled with **extra virgin olive oil**.



▲ BABY LEEKS WITH WALNUTS, ANCHOVIES & ROASTED CAPSICUMS Brush blanched **baby leeks** (or **green beans**) with **olive oil** and grill or barbecue until cooked but still crisp. Place on a large platter and serve sprinkled with a mixture of chopped toasted **walnuts**, a little **garlic**, thinly sliced roasted **red capsicums**, chopped **anchovies**, **basil leaves** and a sprinkling of **balsamic vinegar**.

ZUCCHINI WITH TOMATOES & PINE NUTS Panfry lots of sliced **zucchini**, **lemon zest** and chopped **garlic** in **olive oil** until the zucchini is soft. Remove and reserve. Clean the pan and add lots of **olive oil** and chopped **onion**. Slow-fry the onion until soft. Add plenty of chopped, peeled and cored ripe **tomatoes** and bring to the boil. Taste and season well. Place the zucchini on a warm serving platter, pour the tomato sauce on top and serve sprinkled with roasted **pine nuts** and **basil leaves**. Good with chicken or lamb.

LEEKS WITH LEMON HERB CREAM Grill or barbecue blanched **leeks** or thickly sliced **fennel bulbs** that have been brushed with **olive oil**. Put some **cream** in a small bowl, add plenty of **lemon juice** and after 10 minutes stir slowly and the cream will thicken. Add finely grated **lemon zest**, chopped **chervil**, **parsley** and finely chopped **shallot** and season well. Pour this over the hot vegetables and serve. Good with fish, chicken or lamb.

GREEN PEA PURÉE WITH LEMON HERB CREAM Use the same **lemon herb cream** as above swirled through **green peas** that have been boiled, drained and puréed. Good with chicken or fish.

FENNEL, ORANGE & FIG SALAD Thinly slice plenty of **fennel bulb** and place in a bowl with **rocket leaves**, thinly sliced **dried figs** and **red onion**, and some **black olives**. Peel some **oranges** with a sharp knife so there is no pith. Over a bowl, cut segments of orange from in between the membrane divisions of the oranges, saving the juice. Put the segments and juice in the bowl with the fennel mixture. Add **lemon juice** to taste and some **extra virgin olive oil**. Season and serve. Good with fish or chicken.

CARROT, RICOTTA & LEMON SALAD Boil lots of **carrots** that have been cut into thick sticks in **well-salted water** until just tender. Drain and place in a large salad bowl. Add plenty of coarsely crumbled **ricotta**, and **lemon zest** and **juice**. Drizzle with **extra virgin olive oil**, season well and toss briefly. Sprinkle with chopped **chives** and **chervil sprigs** and serve warm or at room temperature. Good with chicken, ham or turkey.

FRIED EGGPLANT & ZUCCHINI SALAD

SERVES 6

4 tablespoons olive oil
4 zucchini, cut into 2cm-thick slices
2 eggplants, halved and cut into thin wedges
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon dried wild oregano
2 handfuls rocket leaves
50ml extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
½ cup black olives
½ cup sliced semidried tomatoes (I used the Telegraph Hill Manuka Smoked Semi-Dried Tomatoes – the smoky flavour is excellent in this dish)
salt and freshly ground black pepper
mint leaves for serving

In a large frying pan, heat the olive oil over moderate-high heat and add the zucchini, eggplant, garlic and oregano. Fry until the vegetables are well browned and just starting to soften. Remove from the heat.

Place the rocket leaves on a serving platter and sprinkle the hot vegetables on top.

Put the extra virgin olive oil, vinegar, olives and tomatoes in a bowl. Mix well, taste and season. Pour this over everything.

Sprinkle with mint leaves and serve warm or at room temperature. Good with roast lamb, chicken, turkey or beef.



COS LETTUCE & PICKLED VEGETABLE SALAD Slice **carrots**, **fennel**, **cucumber** and **radishes** into paper-thin slices and toss with a tablespoon of **fine salt**. Reserve for 30 minutes then rinse well and squeeze dry. Place in a large bowl with **white wine vinegar** or **Moscatel vinegar** and **extra virgin olive oil**. Add some **capers** and some chopped **gherkin**, **parsley** and lots of **baby cos** leaves.

BARBECUED CAPSICUM SALAD Toast plenty of 2cm-thick sliced **sourdough bread** on the barbecue (or in the toaster) then place the bread slices in a shallow dish side by side. Core, quarter and seed lots of **red** and **yellow capsicums** and brush lightly with **olive oil**. Barbecue (or roast side by side in a roasting dish in a hot oven) until well browned and softening then place on the bread so it is completely covered. Sprinkle with **capers**, **black olives** and **parsley**, and dress with **balsamic vinegar**. Good with ham, lamb, beef, chicken and turkey.

APPLE, CUCUMBER & GREEN BEAN SALAD Place chopped **apples**, diced **cucumber**, blanched **green beans** and a couple of finely sliced **spring onions** in a salad bowl. Dress with **cider vinegar** and **plain unsweetened yoghurt**, toss briefly and serve. Goes well with pork and ham.

RED CABBAGE & BEETROOT SALAD Thinly slice **red cabbage** and grate raw peeled **beetroot**. Place in a large salad bowl and add finely chopped **red onion**, dried **cranberries**, toasted **walnuts** and **croûtons** made from **sourdough bread** that has been brushed with **olive oil** and baked until crisp in a hot oven. Dress with **balsamic vinegar** and **extra virgin olive oil** and season well. Good with beef, lamb, ham, turkey and pork.

MUSHROOM & HERB SALAD Thinly slice lots of **button mushrooms** and place in a salad bowl with the **zest** of a **lemon**, chopped **chervil**, **tarragon**, **parsley** and **rocket leaves**. Dress with **lemon juice**, **extra virgin olive oil**, **salt** and plenty of freshly ground **black pepper**. Adding fried **bacon** is optional. Good with turkey, chicken or fish.

TOMATO SALAD Has anyone ever turned their nose up at perfectly ripe **tomatoes** that have been well seasoned, sliced and placed on a platter then drizzled with **extra virgin olive oil**, the best **balsamic vinegar** you can lay your hands on and with lots of **basil leaves** scattered on top? Good with everything.



SWEETCORN & ROASTED CAPSICUM SALAD Slice the kernels off **sweetcorn** cobs and blanch in boiling water. Add sliced roasted **red capsicum**, toasted **cumin seeds**, chopped **avocados** and **baby cos leaves**, and dress with **avocado oil** and **lime juice**. Good with chicken, turkey and pork.

GRANADA SALAD This is a salad I once ate in Granada in Spain. On a large white platter arrange separate piles of thickly sliced **iceberg lettuce**, **tomato** wedges, drained canned **artichoke hearts**, **radicchio**, sliced **avocado**, **cucumber** chunks, **radishes**, **oranges** and blanched **asparagus**. Serve with **extra virgin olive oil** and **sherry vinegar**, and **salt** and a **pepper** mill on the side. Everyone helps themselves and dresses their own salad. Goes with everything, but after the main as a separate course.

ASPARAGUS & RÉMOULADE Steam lots of **asparagus** and place on a large platter. Make a rémoulade sauce by mixing some bought **mayonnaise** with chopped **anchovies**, **capers**, **gherkins**, **parsley** and a spoonful of **Dijon mustard**. Serve the asparagus with a bowl of the sauce on the side. Everyone serves themselves and puts a dollop of rémoulade on top. Good with chicken.

ROASTED TOMATOES WITH ANCHOVIES, OLIVES & PANGRATTATO Place lots of cored ripe **tomatoes** side by side in a roasting pan. Sprinkle with **Kalamata olives**, chopped **anchovies**, **dried oregano**, chopped **garlic**, and **salt** and **pepper**. Roast in a hot oven for about 10 minutes until browned and hot but not collapsing. Serve sprinkled with crisp fried **breadcrumbs** and chopped **parsley**. Good with beef, lamb and chicken.

▲ BRAISED POTATOES & CARROTS WITH CRÈME FRAÎCHE & PROSCIUTTO

SERVES 6

900g Agria or other floury potatoes, peeled and cut into 4cm chunks
3 carrots, peeled, halved and sliced lengthwise
500ml vegetable stock
salt and freshly ground black pepper
100ml crème fraîche
3 slices prosciutto, cut into 2cm pieces
zest of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons chopped chives

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Put the potatoes and carrots in a shallow roasting pan and add the stock. Season and mix well.

Place in the oven for 40-50 minutes until the vegetables are tender and the stock is almost all absorbed.

Remove from the oven. Drizzle the crème fraîche on top then sprinkle the prosciutto, zest and chives over and serve.

A great accompaniment with lamb, beef, chicken and turkey.

Credits: Decorative ceramic plate and platter, La Chamba dish, red placemat, red denim napkin and green tumbler all from French Country Collections; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



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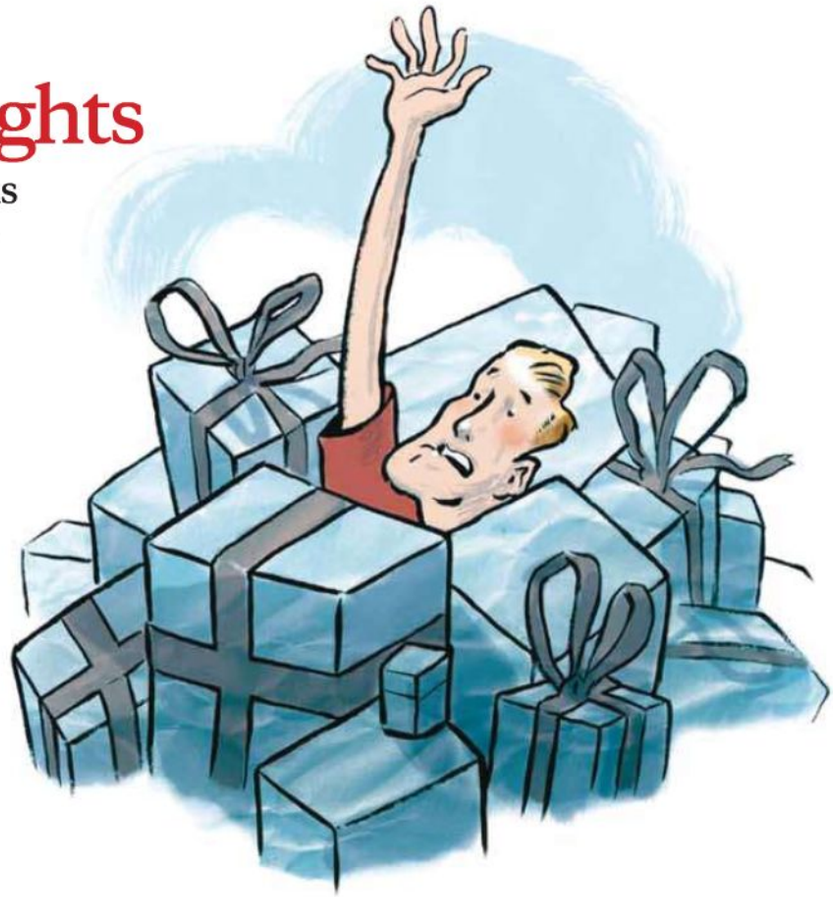
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Second thoughts

Ralph Kyte-Powell looks gift horses in the mouth



My mum taught me to be gracious when receiving gifts. "Remember, it's the thought that counts," she would say. This laudable point of view made it possible to avoid a little of the disappointment you felt when a Christmas present wasn't quite as fabulous as you had hoped. It's an adage I have often had to bear in mind and on occasion it has been really tested.

Gift-giving is a fraught business and so is gift-receiving. At Christmas 2009, I was given a gift pack of jams that bore a use-by date of February 2009. It was obviously what is known as a "re-gift", something the original recipient spurns and passes on as a gift to another, clearly inconsequential, person.

What if I hadn't noticed the ancient use-by date? Got stuck into the contents with the total abandon of the true buttered-toast-and-jam bloke I am?

Death climbing Mt Everest, death heroically fighting off a shark that was threatening toddlers, death fighting a bushfire rushing towards a hospital – now, these are deaths worthy of wordy epitaphs and obituaries. Death by eating raspberry jam could only lead to funereal sniggering and comical epitaphs.

If it's the thought that counts, as Mum said, what thought is going through somebody's mind when they re-gift foodstuffs past their use-by date? Am I past my use-by date? Maybe, but I'd rather not be told.

Re-gifting can go in your favour, though. I was once re-gifted a bottle of expensive Champagne. How did I know it was a re-gift? The culprit had omitted to remove a little white sticker on the bottle that read "Trade sample only. Not for resale." Is this a re-gift or a re-sample? I'm all for re-gifting of this sort.

Then there's the "what-in-God's-name-is-it?" gift. Some friends of mine once had a Christmas party and most guests brought gifts. A bottle of this, a jar of that, a smattering of re-gifts, a re-sample or two. Among them was a metal object that looked to have some utilitarian qualities. Made of chromed metal, it had a sort of handle and a sort of curved bit and a lopsided look to it that made it difficult to stand up on a shelf. Nobody could remember who the gift was from and for months the recipients asked everyone they met whether they knew what it was. Some sort of alarming medical apparatus? Perhaps a cooking utensil essential for some yet-to-be-trendy ethnic cuisine. It still sits on a shelf at their place, dusty and all but forgotten. Perhaps it will be found by an archaeological dig in a thousand years and puzzle future generations as it has us.

How did I know the Champagne was a re-gift? By the little sticker that read "Trade sample only"

It's the thought that counts. Yes, Mum, but what if the thought is small, rude, or even downright selfish? What if it involves the sort of cheap stuff that can only offend the recipient, eliciting uncharitable thoughts? And what about the ratio of gift given to gift received? If you gift something worth $100, should you be satisfied when the recipient gifts you something from the $2 shop? If the giver has little money it shouldn't be an issue, but what if they're really well-heeled and happily spend hundreds on themselves on a whim while giving you a knick-knack worth a couple of dollars? It may be ungracious to think like this, but most of us have.

Gifts have to be appropriate too. Prim and proper little old ladies shouldn't receive adults-only join-the-dots books. Graphic, horror videos aren't good for youngsters. If your uncle is battling alcoholism, giving him a bottle of Scotch isn't a good idea. People who love exciting music shouldn't be given Barry Manilow CDs. Unless of course the thought that counts is to inflict writhing pain. "This one's for you. Now weep."

Then there are the great Christmas gifts. Once received, these gifts make you wonder how you ever survived without them. Like the espresso machine I got a couple of years ago (there was no sample sticker).

My wife is a thoughtful gift giver, but this time she excelled herself. It's used every day and the most wonderful coffee is on tap at all times. The only downside to having an espresso machine comes around at Christmas when the family gather. Now I have to perform the Cappuccino Shuffle, which involves making cappuccini and frothy hot chocolates for about 20 people, all of them champing at the bit for perfectly executed hot drinks.

It's a test of skill and patience, especially after plenty of Christmas cheer, but after all it's the thought that counts. Merry Christmas.

ILLUSTRATION BY DARON PARTON

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS

OUR 2010 CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE is all about classical design and classical treats. How, indeed, could you go past the season of giving without the indulgence of Belgian chocolate or a sip or two of fine New Zealand wine matched to award-winning cheese? Or ensuring your or a loved one's kitchen is up to date with the latest in stylish cookware and appliances?



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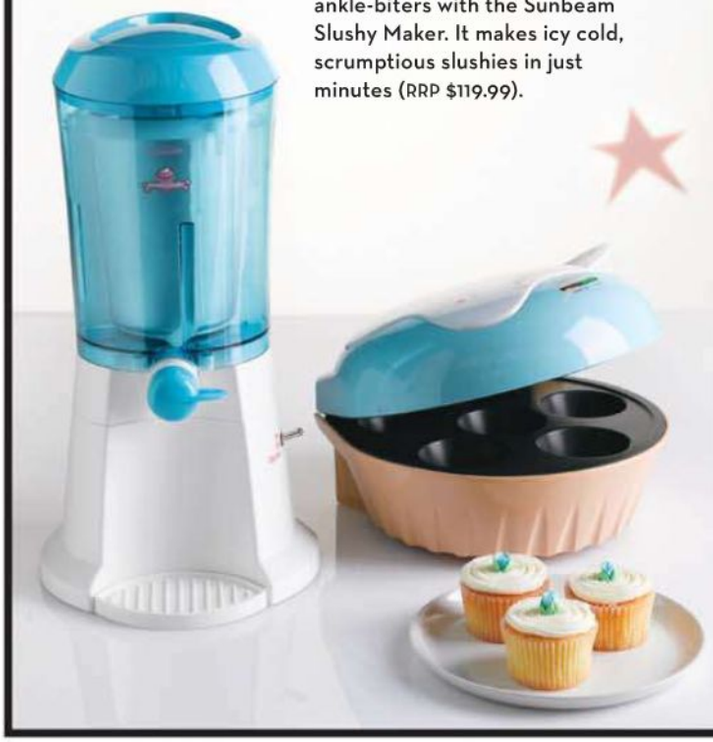
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It's in the box

Tohu's special-edition branded wooden box sets each contain one bottle of Sauvignon Blanc and one of Pinot Noir. These tasteful sets are available in a Premium ($49.90) or Reserve ($59.90) selection. Tohu is a member of the Sustainable Winegrowing NZ programme and the boxes are made from sustainable Central Otago pine. To place your Christmas order, call 0800-864 894 or email enquiries@tohu.co.nz



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PHOTOGRAPHY MELANIE JENKINS/FLASH STUDIOS; WHITE CUPS AND SAUCERS BY DENBY (WITH THE ROCKET); HUTSCHENREUTHER EASY PLATE (WITH GUYLIAN CHOCOLATES) AND SPIEGELAU WINE GLASSES (WITH VILLA MARIA SINGLE VINEYARD WINES). ALL FROM THE STUDIO OF TABLEWARE; CUPCAKES BY MAGGIE MOWBRAY; THE LITTLE CAKE KITCHEN; DECOGLAZE RED GLASS FROM GLASS SPLASHBACKS

Pride of the vineyard

Treat someone to the pick of the bunch with this gift box of two Villa Maria single-vineyard wines: Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2009 and the Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Noir 2007. The alluring Pinot Gris has pear and cinnamon aromas, while the concentrated, velvety Pinot Noir has a classic nose of ripe cherries. The gift pack is available for $70 at villamaria.co.nz



The taste of success

With 23 medals at this year's *Cuisine* Champions of Cheese Awards, Whitestone's South Island artisan cheeses are no longer an aficionado's secret. But they still make perfect gifts: the wooden gift box with six handmade cheeses and your own personal note is $55 (including p&p); or a cheese tin with a 300g wedge of Windsor Blue is $35 (including p&p). Ph: 0800-892 433, whitestonecheese.co.nz

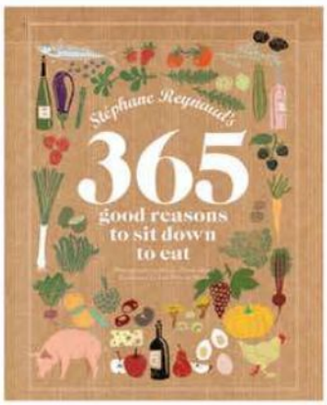


Consummate cookware

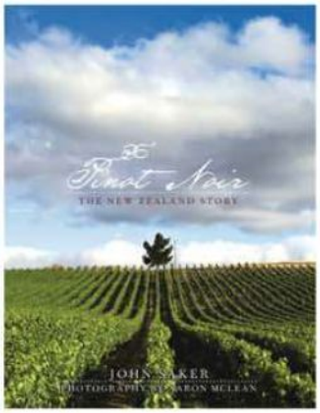
Cuisipro's elegant three-ply, composite stainless-steel cookware features an aluminium core and can be relied on for rapid, even heat distribution on any cooking surface. In fact, it's so reliable it comes with a 25-year warranty. Packed with innovative features such as stay-cool handles, the non-stick pans use embedded Excalibur technology – the world's toughest non-stick surface. Prices start at $99.95. For info/stockists, call Zimba, ph: 09-376 9430 (Australia, ph: 1800-147 538) or visit cuisipro.com











PINOT NOIR: THE NEW ZEALAND STORY

John Saker, Random House New Zealand, p/b, $50

Leading New Zealand wine columnist and *Cuisine* regular John Saker first encountered Pinot Noir as a young man while living in France in the mid-1970s. He had heard a lot about the great Pinots of Burgundy and decided to give them a try. "I felt gypped," he writes. "They were pallid, acidic, ungenerous wines." Little did he know then how much the capricious, mysteriously seductive Pinot Noir would come to mean to him.

John's sister Nicola, an early convert, rekindled his interest after his return to New Zealand. Utterly seduced, he has now written the first comprehensive book about New Zealand Pinot Noir.

Pinot Noir traces the history of the variety in New Zealand in detail, from the first recorded planting of Pinot by the Marist brothers of the early Mission Estate in 1889. Although, we learn, a Frenchman called Jean Désiré Feraud may have been the Pinot pioneer, having produced a "Burgundy Wine" in the 1870s.

John then takes us on a tour of New Zealand's great Pinot regions, describing their origins, what makes them special and profiling his "personal selection" of key producers in each region. Written in John's personable style, and illustrated with the atmospheric photography of Aaron McLean, *Pinot Noir* is a friendly, informative and insightful read. Everybody with an interest in New Zealand wine should have a copy. **RALPH KYTE-POWELL**

GIVEAWAY

We have five copies of Pinot Noir to give away, courtesy of Random House. To enter, email **competitions@cuisine.co.nz** by 13 December, putting Pinot Noir in the subject line.

QUAY: FOOD INSPIRED BY NATURE

Peter Gilmore, Murdoch, h/b, $120

This book is sumptuous – possibly the best-looking food book this year – and everything about it screams quality. Sydney's Quay is an institution – consistently at the top of many best-of lists (see our Sydney restaurant feature, page 142) and its executive chef, Peter Gilmore, cooks dishes that combine a Japanese sense of the aesthetic with meticulous attention to texture. His is a cuisine of absolute precision and control.

In many ways this is destined to be a coffee-table book – many recipes aren't easily achievable by the home cook, who is unlikely to have access to sous-vide equipment, for instance, although suggestions for the home are offered. The recipes, too, are complex and require a strong measure of technique.

But in many ways that isn't the point. This is a book that will inspire and influence a generation of up-and-coming chefs in much the same way that *The French Laundry Cookbook* did more than a decade ago. The luscious photography comes courtesy of Anson Smart. **GINNY GRANT**

MY PARTY: CANAPÉS AND COCKTAILS

Pete Evans, Murdoch, h/b, $60

The title pretty much says it all – this is a book of party food and cocktails tied to different themes: pool parties, spice nights, Mexican, black tie, high tea and more. With fresh flavours and recipes that range from simple pizzas and Caesar tartlets to more complex braised oxtail dumplings with mushroom broth, it makes an excellent book for the party season. And if cocktail food doesn't rock your boat, then drinking your way through the myriad cocktails should. From the classic negroni to the more frivolous passionfruit swizzle or limoncello and basil martini, there's plenty to please. **GINNY GRANT**

STÉPHANE REYNAUD'S 365 GOOD REASONS TO SIT DOWN TO EAT

Stéphane Reynaud, Murdoch, h/b, $90

Here's another fabulous cookbook from the man who brought us *Pork & Sons* and *Rôtis*. There's a recipe for every day of the year and excellent tips and instructions, all with Reynaud's hilarious sense of humour, punning and Gallic charm.

This is about having fun and enjoying cooking, and mostly the recipes are simple and easy to prepare, though Reynaud does assume you have some basic technique. It goes without saying they are delicious.

There is also the story of Marie and Léon scattered throughout – a wry tale of the culinary adventures of an ordinary cook and her husband, a lover of fine food.

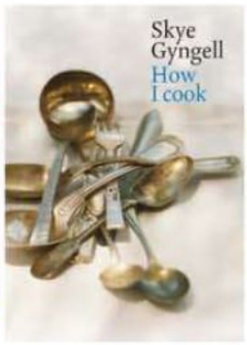
Once again the photos from Marie-Pierre Morel are simple and beautiful, and the illustrations from José Reis de Matos add to the charm. **GINNY GRANT**

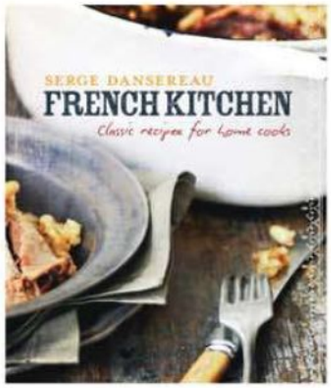
THE FLAVOUR THESAURUS: PAIRINGS, RECIPES AND IDEAS FOR THE CREATIVE COOK

Niki Segnit, Bloomsbury, h/b, $55

I was expecting a rather dry read here, but I was rapidly caught up in the interesting combinations and amusing, informative commentary. There are some great quotes, anecdotes, recipes and fascinating historical notes. The 99 flavours profiled are placed into categories such as







woodland, marine, roasted, bramble and hedge. The scientific information about why some flavours work together is written in layperson's terms.

So, do caviar and white chocolate really go together, on the premise that salty food brings out the sweetness in other ingredients? Read and find out.

This is a delicious book to dip into and an inspiration for aspiring chefs or curious cooks. GINNY GRANT

FRENCH KITCHEN: CLASSIC RECIPES FOR HOME COOKS

Serge Dansereau, Harper Collins, h/b, $65

One of the attributes I admire most about Sydney's Bathers' Pavilion chef and owner Serge Dansereau is his ability to strip classical recipes to the basics and reinterpret them for the home cook. Here a collection of French dishes is modernised with an emphasis on fresh, seasonal ingredients. Most of the recipes offer variations for seasonal produce and suggestions for turning the basic dish into something more elaborate (for example, from a breakfast dish into a dessert).

There are excellent family dishes, mostly made with readily available ingredients, plus elegant mains suitable for a dinner party. The incredibly easy yet delicious chocolate cake gets top points for using only two bowls.

A beautiful cookbook destined to be well thumbed and used. GINNY GRANT

HOW I COOK

Skye Gyngell, Quadrille, h/b, $65

Skye Gyngell is a food columnist for *The Independent* and head chef at the much-acclaimed Petersham Nurseries in London. Her food – as evidenced by this book's gorgeous predecessors, *A Year in My Kitchen* and *My Favourite Ingredients* – has a strong seasonal and local focus. There are dishes for the entire day – from breakfast, morning and afternoon teas to simple weekday suppers, and the dishes aren't particularly difficult to prepare.

This book is supposed to be all about everyday food for the home, but it all just feels a little too posh. It's not really a criticism. I admire the sparse elegance of her dishes and the very English repertoire – think cucumber sandwiches, damson jam, and bread and butter pudding – which is countered with a modern Italian sensibility in the recipes for panzanella, slow-cooked chard and roasted tomatoes with basil and lemon. GINNY GRANT





flipp side

In his new book, chef Martin Bosley casts a fond eye back on the much-loved, long-lamented Brasserie Flipp, star of the Wellington restaurant scene in the 1990s

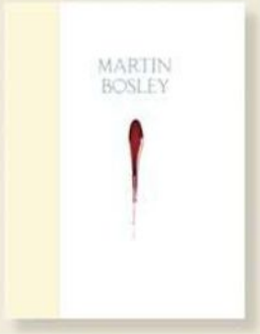
Flipp was New Zealand's first real brasserie and these were heady times. Champagne flowed and cigarettes were smoked. Flipp was chic, glamorous and fabulous. Dean was the host, Marcus ran the floor, and I ran the kitchen. It was a unique team, and Dean was committed to us being a world-class restaurant. Large vases of fresh flowers filled the dining room and bar, the art featured emerging New Zealand artists, the music was carefully selected each evening and the lighting continually adjusted so that our guests, as well as the restaurant, looked their best.

My food now became influenced by food writers like Patricia Wells, Alice Waters, Marcella Hazan, Jeremiah Tower and Claudia Roden. I desperately wanted to seek out the bold flavours of the Mediterranean. Fresh mozzarella was not available anywhere at that time so I virtually had to forage for it. Through my seafood suppliers I discovered an elderly Italian lady living in Island Bay, who made her own. She would get up at four each morning to stretch the curds. I would drive out to her house once a week to buy four of the softest balls of cheese, tied with butcher's twine, the sum total of her work. It was in her garden that I saw my first Italian plum tomato, and learnt that cooking globe artichokes in a pot with sliced potato prevents them from going black. We barely spoke but I observed a lot.

In those days fresh figs never came into the vegetable market and consequently never appeared on menus. We discovered that fig trees lined the streets of Mt Victoria, and we would drive my Fiat Uno along the footpath late at night, a cook perched on the roof picking the ripest fruit. As we discovered food, we were literally presenting it to our guests. This was when I started to form my basic philosophy of only ever eating what is fresh, what is local, and what is in season.

Not everything was a great success. Our risotto, made with Gabriele Ferron's carnaroli rice, was silky, the plump grains still with a firm bite to them, carefully seasoned with parmesan cheese. But its delicious creaminess was its downfall for every night bowls of beautiful risotto would be returned to the kitchen because it wasn't stir-fried, as was the standard restaurant rice risotto of the time. We removed it from the menu, only to be presented with a petition signed by regulars demanding the return of the "Flipp Gluggy Rice". We featured farfalle and penne but had to write in parentheses (pasta). That we handmade our ravioli was considered ground-breaking and newsworthy.

Brasserie Flipp was listed in *Courvoisier's Book of the Best*, a select list of only 2000 restaurants worldwide. Wellington had never seen a restaurant like it, and there is certainly nothing like it left.



GIVEAWAY

This abridged introduction and the following recipes are from the Flipp chapter of *Martin Bosley* (Random House NZ, $90 h/b), published on 5 November. We have five copies to give away, courtesy of Random House. Email competitions@cuisine.co.nz by 13 December to go in the draw, with Martin Bosley in the subject line.

MARTIN BOSLEY PORTRAIT BY NICOLA EDMONDS; FOOD PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANE USSHER

QUAIL WITH WHISKY & WILD ROCKET RISOTTO

SERVES 4

Gabriele Ferron, Italy's famous grower of carnaroli rice, showed me the real way to cook risotto. While I understood in an instant the beauty of creamy al dente rice that oozes across a plate, the diner took somewhat longer to appreciate it in the same way. Now everyone's an expert.

Do not wash the rice before cooking or you will end up rinsing off some of the lovely starch which helps to thicken the risotto. When finished, the risotto should be creamy and loose, and will settle after 15 seconds or so on the plate, absorbing any excess liquid.

Whisky & Wild Rocket Risotto
600ml chicken stock
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup finely chopped onion
500g carnaroli or arborio rice
1 bay leaf
160ml whisky
salt and freshly ground black pepper
handful wild rocket, washed

Put the stock in a saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer.

In a heavy-based saucepan heat the olive oil then add the butter. When melted, add the onion and gently sauté, without colouring, until soft and shiny. Lower the heat, add the rice and begin to toast it gently. Stir continuously so all the grains get coated in the butter and oil. As the rice cooks it will start to give off delicate nutty and floral aromas. This should take about 5 minutes.

Add the bay leaf and stir. Pour in the whisky, stirring until it has been absorbed by the rice. Pour all the simmering stock onto the rice, stir in well and cover the saucepan with a lid. Cook for 13 minutes.

Remove the lid and stir the rice. Test a little – it should still be a little firm to the bite. Correct the seasoning with salt and pepper.

If you wish, you could serve the risotto at this point, adding as much or as little parmesan as you like and stirring vigorously just before serving to make it even creamier. Or you can proceed to add the wild rocket and cook for a further 3 minutes.

For the quail
2 cloves garlic, peeled
pinch of flaky sea salt
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
4 quail

Crush the garlic with the flat blade of a large cook's knife. Scrape it into a bowl and mix to a paste with a good pinch of flaky sea salt. Add the olive oil and lemon juice, and then the quail. Coat in the marinade, and refrigerate for 3-4 hours.

Preheat the oven to 190°C. Place the quail in a roasting dish and spoon over the marinade. Roast for 25 minutes until golden brown. Remove from the oven and set aside until cool enough to handle.

Using the tip of a sharp knife, carefully lift the breasts off each side of the breastbone and separate the legs from the rest of the body. Serve these on top of the risotto and spoon over the juices from the roasting pan.





VALRHONA CHOCOLATE TERRINE WITH COFFEE BEAN ANGLAISE

SERVES 13

Rich, dark, decadent – the magic of Valrhona chocolate gives the terrine a lingering depth of flavour. You need to make the terrine a day ahead.

Valrhona Chocolate Terrine

250g unsalted butter, chopped
250g caster sugar
250g Valrhona Guanaja chocolate (or another 70%), chopped
5 eggs
1 tablespoon flour

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the butter in a deep bowl. Pour the sugar over the butter, then place the chocolate on top (this is so the butter and sugar dissolve and line the bowl, preventing the chocolate from sticking). Place the bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water, until the chocolate has melted, then remove from the heat. Transfer the mixture to an electric mixer with the whisk attachment fitted.

In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs with the flour. With the mixer running, pour the egg mixture into the chocolate and continue to whisk until the mixture becomes smooth and shiny.

Line a terrine or loaf tin with baking paper and pour in the chocolate mixture. Cover with a lid or tinfoil and place in a deep roasting dish. Pour in water to halfway up the sides of the terrine or tin and place in the oven for 1½ hours, until it is slightly glossy in the centre. Refrigerate overnight to set.

Coffee Bean Anglaise

500ml cream
5 egg yolks
100g sugar
30ml espresso
½ teaspoon finely ground fresh coffee beans

In a saucepan, bring the cream to the boil then set aside.

Beat the egg yolks and sugar together until pale. Slowly add the cream to the sugar and yolk mixture while whisking continuously. Return to a moderate heat and cook, stirring continuously, until the custard coats the back of a wooden spoon. Remove from the heat and add the espresso and coffee beans. Cool in the refrigerator until required.

To assemble

icing sugar for dusting
whipped cream to serve
2 teaspoons syrup from marmalade
1 teaspoon freeze-dried plum powder (I use Fresh As; or combine 1 teaspoon each cocoa, icing sugar and instant coffee and sieve over)

Remove the terrine from the tin, dust with icing sugar and cut into wedges. Serve the coffee bean anglaise alongside, top with whipped cream, dot the plate with marmalade syrup and sprinkle with freeze-dried plum powder or cocoa, icing sugar and coffee mixture.

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Slow-Cooked Salmon with Spiced Tomato Sauce & Coriander, page 68

AARON McLEAN

FÊTE MODERN

Celia Harvey creates a chic Christmas menu



VENISON WITH SMOKY EGGPLANT PURÉE, TAHINI DRESSING & POMEGRANATE recipe page 64

A special Christmas dinner

doesn't have to be all about turkey and trimmings. When having a group of friends around for the event – there's nothing I like to do more than cook for a crowd – I like to get creative with an exciting menu that's a little global and not so traditional.

This menu features dishes I have been playing with this year. So showcase them – they will make a memorable feast for friends and family.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY CELIA HARVEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST







★

Lime & Tequila Ceviche with Avocado Cream

Chicken, Asparagus & Crayfish Paella with Almond Alioli

Venison Fillets with Smoky Eggplant Purée, Pomegranate & Tahini Dressing

Orange Caramel, Mascarpone & Raspberry Trifle

LIME & TEQUILA CEVICHE WITH AVOCADO CREAM

SERVES 6

This South American-inspired start to the menu always makes a big hit – especially with its addition of tequila. Allowing enough time for the seafood to marinate is the key. Serve in short glasses or on scallop shells.

2 squid tubes, washed and patted dry
12 scallops, roe removed (freeze for another use), washed and patted dry
6 large raw prawns tails, peeled and deveined
salt for marinating
125ml tequila (or more to taste)
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
2 tablespoons brown sugar
juice of 10 limes
finely sliced zest of 2 limes
1 red onion, very finely diced
1 Lebanese cucumber, seeded and finely diced
½ pawpaw, peeled and finely diced
2 red chillies, seeded and cut into fine matchsticks
⅓ cup coriander leaves, finely sliced, plus extra for garnish
freshly ground black pepper
1 avocado
2 tablespoons sour cream or crème fraîche
juice of ½ lemon
pinch of cayenne or splash of Kaitaia Fire or Tabasco
1 tablespoon light olive oil

Slit the sides of the squid tubes, open out and slice into thin strips then cut into 5mm dice. Slice each scallop into 3-4 thin discs and place with the squid in a non-metallic flat dish.

Slice the prawns lengthwise and add to the dish. Sprinkle generously with salt and pour the tequila over. Add the vinegar, 1 teaspoon of the sugar and the lime juice and zest. Cover and leave to marinate for at least 30 minutes.

Place the onion, cucumber, pawpaw and half the chopped chilli in a bowl. Mix in the coriander and remaining sugar, taste and season with salt and pepper. Set aside to macerate.

Peel the avocado and place in a food processor with the sour cream or crème fraîche, lemon juice and cayenne or chilli sauce and pulse, adding a little light olive oil, until the mixture is light and fluffy. Season with salt and pepper.

Spoon the pawpaw mixture into glasses or shells, top with a generous amount of ceviche (juice and all) then pipe or spoon the avocado cream over. Top with the remaining chilli and sprigs of coriander.



This South American-inspired start to the menu always makes a big hit – especially with its addition of tequila







CHICKEN, ASPARAGUS & CRAYFISH PAELLA WITH ALMOND ALIOLI

SERVES 6 AS A STARTER

Paella makes a great shared platter as a starter and here I've made a festive one with saffron and crayfish tail. You can use monkfish or hapuku fillets instead of crayfish. It is important to cut the meat up small so it cooks in the same time as the rice. Morcilla, a Spanish black pudding made with rice (available at Sabato in Mt Eden, Auckland, and online at sabato.co.nz), can be used instead of chorizo. I add a little lemon juice to the rice as it stops it sticking – a hint I got from Janet Mendel's book *Cooking in Spain*.

olive oil for frying
1 onion, finely diced
2 small chicken breasts (around 300g altogether), cut into 2cm-3cm dice
1 crayfish tail, shell cut away and meat diced (and legs too if you have them)
1 chorizo sausage (or 1 black pudding sausage), cut into 2cm-3cm dice
3 cloves garlic, crushed to a paste
1 teaspoon saffron threads
400g calasparra or medium-grain rice, unwashed
1 teaspoon paprika
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1¼ litres light chicken stock, brought to the boil
juice of 1 lemon
1 fresh bay leaf
2 sprigs thyme
6 asparagus spears, tough ends snapped off and cut into 1cm lengths
100g peas
100ml extra virgin olive oil

Cover the base of a 25-30cm non-stick flat frying pan with olive oil, add the onion and chicken, and fry gently until lightly browned. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add a little more oil to the pan, add the crayfish, chorizo and garlic and sear over high heat for about 3 minutes. Remove and set aside.

Add the saffron and rice to the pan with more oil if needed. Stir the rice well so it is coated with oil and fry until slightly opaque.

Sprinkle the paprika over and season with salt and pepper. Pour in the boiling stock and a squeeze of lemon juice, and add the bay leaf and thyme sprigs. Reduce the heat to low, return the onion, chicken and chorizo to the pan and cook uncovered over low heat for about 20 minutes. Stir the rice over only once and leave to cook without stirring. After 10-15 minutes of cooking return the crayfish (or fish) to the pan with the asparagus and peas. Gently mix in.

Take the paella off the heat while the rice still has some bite to it and let it sit for 5 minutes before serving.

Serve the paella at the table in the dish it has been cooked in.

Serve with almond alioli (recipe follows) on the side.

Almond Alioli

Add the chopped nuts at the end of making this alioli (the Spanish spelling of aïoli) or their oil will split the mayonnaise, as will the garlic paste if added early. And add more lemon juice or vinegar if you prefer a more tart emulsion. Make sure all the ingredients are at room temperature for the best result.

4 cloves garlic
1 teaspoon salt
100g blanched almonds, roasted until golden
2 egg yolks
2 teaspoons lemon juice
250ml extra virgin olive oil
freshly ground black pepper

With the flat blade of a knife, crush the garlic to a paste with the salt. In a food processor, coarsely chop the nuts then remove and set aside. Place the egg yolks in the food processor with the lemon juice and process until light and fluffy then, with the motor running, slowly add the oil in a steady stream until thick and creamy. Add the garlic paste and some pepper and finally the nuts. Serve with the paella.



VENISON WITH SMOKY EGGPLANT PURÉE, TAHINI DRESSING & POMEGRANATE

SERVES 6

The smoky rub and Middle Eastern flavours marry well with the rich meat. Only cook the meat to medium rare for the best flavour and texture.

Smoky Eggplant Purée
1 bulb garlic
3 medium eggplants
125ml olive oil
60ml tahini
juice of 1 lemon
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 170°C. Wrap the garlic in tinfoil and rub the eggplants with a little of the oil. Place both on an oven tray and put in the oven until the eggplants are soft and wrinkly (about 20 minutes). Remove and set aside to cool.

When the eggplants are cool enough to handle, peel with a small sharp knife. The skin should come away easily. Place the flesh in a strainer to drain while you squeeze the garlic cloves out of their skins.

Place the garlic in a food processor with the tahini and process until smooth. Add the eggplant and the lemon juice. With the motor running, slowly add the oil in a steady stream and process to a fine purée. Taste and season with salt and black pepper. Set aside.

Tahini Dressing
60ml tahini
100ml plain unsweetened yoghurt
1 clove garlic, crushed to a paste with some salt
1 tablespoon finely sliced mint or coriander leaves

Combine all the ingredients and whisk until emulsified. Set aside.

For the venison
1½ tablespoons pink peppercorns
1½ tablespoons cumin seeds
½ tablespoon coriander seeds
1-2 teaspoons flaky sea salt
6 x venison medallions (125g-150g each)
oil for frying
6 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
1 pomegranate, seeds scraped out (or punnet of pomegranate seeds, available at specialist food stores)

In a dry small frying pan over a low heat, toast the peppercorns, seeds and salt until they start popping and smoking gently. Remove and grind coarsely in a mortar or spice grinder. Dust the medallions with this mixture and leave at room temperature.

Heat a heavy frying pan to a moderate heat with a little oil (not too much as the idea is to allow the dry rub to smoke and sear). Add the medallions and press down to sear. Leave for 2-3 minutes only each side. Remove and set aside to rest.

Gently warm the eggplant purée in the microwave or in a double-boiler then spoon on to plates. Top with a medallion and drizzle with dressing then 1 tablespoon of pomegranate molasses over each. Scatter the pomegranate seeds over and serve immediately with the spinach.

SPINACH CÓRDOBA STYLE

2kg spinach, stalks discarded and leaves well washed (this seems a large quantity but it reduces down)
olive oil for frying
½ onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
1 teaspoon paprika
2 teaspoons red or white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Steam the spinach briefly until just limp. Drain well.

Heat enough oil in a large frying pan to cover the base. Add the onion and garlic, fry gently until soft then add the remaining ingredients. Cook for a minute or so then toss in the spinach. Stir to coat and serve.

ORANGE CARAMEL, MASCARPONE & RASPBERRY TRIFLE

For the mascarpone cream
3 egg yolks
150g caster sugar
500g mascarpone
2 tablespoons orange liqueur (or you can use some of the orange caramel)

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar together in a double-boiler over simmering water until the mixture is pale and fluffy. Remove from the heat and cool then fold in the mascarpone and liqueur. Set aside.

Raspberry Purée
250g fresh raspberries (or 1 cup frozen)
2 tablespoons caster sugar
1 tablespoon water

Place the raspberries in a small saucepan, add the sugar and water, and place on low heat until the sugar has dissolved and the raspberries are just starting to break up. Cool before using, but don't make too far ahead or it will become too jammy.

Orange Caramel
400g caster sugar
150ml water
juice of 2 oranges

Place the sugar and water in a saucepan over medium heat until the mixture starts to bubble rapidly and turns a caramel colour. Do not stir but swirl the pan if necessary and brush down the sides with a brush that has been dipped in a little water to stop any crystallisation.

When it is a medium-brown hue, take off the heat and gently stir in the orange juice. The caramel should be a light mahogany colour and syrupy.

To assemble
1½ packets Savoiardi biscuits (6 biscuits per person)
1 teaspoon chopped candied orange rind (or you can use fresh zest)

Break the biscuits in half and, holding them with a fork or small tongs, carefully dip them into the still-warm caramel syrup. Place a layer of soaked biscuits in the bottom of each of 6 glasses.

Spoon a layer of raspberry purée over then follow with a thick layer of the mascarpone cream. Repeat with a layer of soaked biscuits and finish with mascarpone cream. Top with a teaspoon of raspberry purée and a pinch of candied rind. Chill to set.



ORANGE CARAMEL, MASCARPONE & RASPBERRY TRIFLE

Credits: Jasper Conran White and Jasper Conran Chinoiserie White Wedgwood plates and Jasper Conran Strata tumblers all from Smith & Caughey; Christofle Origine Polish cutlery, Paul Wirths Swing Matt forks, Nactmann Havanna dessert glasses, Spiegelau Adina Prestige Champagne flutes, Bordeaux and Multi-Purpose glassware, WMF wine decanter, Spiegelau seafood cocktail set and L&M Hemstitch napkins from The Studio of Tableware; silver beads from French Country Collections; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



plats du jour

Ginny Grant prepares crowd-pleasing mains for the big day

For centuries, a magnificent piece of meat or fish has been served as the centrepiece of celebratory meals such as Christmas, and it is a simple yet impressive way to feed a crowd. Most families have their own favourite vegetable dishes to accompany meats – from simply boiled Jersey Bennes and minted peas to full platters of roasted potatoes, kumara, pumpkin and onions. If we're lucky there may still be some decent asparagus around at Christmas time, or possibly a light salad will fit the bill. I have included some accompaniments here.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY GINNY GRANT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON McLEAN
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



ROAST CHICKENS WITH QUINOA STUFFING recipe page 72

A magnificent piece of meat or fish served as the centrepiece of a celebratory meal is a simple yet impressive way to feed a crowd

SLOW-COOKED SALMON WITH SPICED TOMATO SAUCE & CORIANDER

SERVES 10-15

Not only does a side of salmon have a "wow" factor, it is also simple to prepare. Here the salmon is cooked in a slow oven, which gives it a silky texture, fabulous orange-pink colour and keeps the flesh moist.

Spiced Tomato Sauce
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
1 red chilli, seeded and finely sliced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
2 x 400g cans tomatoes, crushed
2 tablespoons tomato paste
sea salt to taste

In a medium saucepan, heat the oil over low heat, add the garlic and chilli, and fry gently until fragrant (about 1 minute). Add the cumin and coriander, and cook for a further minute. Add the canned tomatoes and tomato paste, and cook for 20 minutes or until thick. Season with salt to taste and set aside. The sauce can be made the day before, but warm it through before using.

For the salmon
1 side salmon (1.5kg-2kg), skin on and pin bones removed
1 tablespoon olive oil
sea salt for seasoning
peel of 1 preserved lemon, very finely sliced
small bunch coriander leaves

Preheat the oven to 120°C.

Remove the salmon from the refrigerator 20 minutes before using to bring up to room temperature. Smear the oil over the salmon and season with sea salt. Place the salmon in a roasting dish lined with a baking sheet or baking paper.

Place in the oven for 20 minutes for rare (or 30 minutes for medium rare) – the salmon should still be a pale colour and just warmed through. Transfer the salmon to a serving dish and cover with the warm tomato sauce. Combine the preserved lemon and coriander leaves, and sprinkle over the top. Serve immediately.

Wine A lighter style of Pinot Noir.

ROAST LEG OF LAMB WITH RAS EL HANOUT

SERVES 8-10

Don't be put off this recipe by the number of ingredients. The spice mix is simple to make (though you can buy it), keeps well in a jar and can be used in other dishes. I sometimes use it instead of curry powder or to make an extra flavoursome tomato sauce. It lends a wonderful aromatic flavour to the lamb. To continue the Moroccan influences, serve with the roasted carrot and orange salad.

Ras el Hanout
2 teaspoons black peppercorns
2 teaspoons fennel seeds
4 teaspoons coriander seeds
16 cardamom pods
2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds
4 teaspoons cumin seeds
2 cinnamon sticks
8 cloves
2 teaspoons whole allspice
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 teaspoons ground ginger
2 teaspoons turmeric
2 teaspoons paprika

Gently toast the peppercorns, fennel, coriander, cardamom, mustard, cumin, cinnamon, cloves and allspice until fragrant. Combine with the remaining ingredients and grind with a mortar and pestle or a spice grinder until powdered.

Makes about ½ cup. Keep in an airtight container.

For the lamb
4 cloves garlic, peeled
½ teaspoon sea salt
2 tablespoons olive oil
2kg leg of lamb
1 cup chicken stock

Preheat the oven to 200°C. With the flat side of a knife, mash the garlic to a paste with the salt. Mix with the olive oil and 4 tablespoons of the ras el hanout then smear this mixture all over the lamb. Place in a baking dish, pour the chicken stock around and roast for 2 hours for medium-rare lamb. Set aside to rest for 30 minutes before carving.

Wine Hawke's Bay Syrah or a Bordeaux blend.

ROASTED CARROT & ORANGE SALAD

600g carrots, scrubbed and halved lengthwise
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
sea salt to taste
4 oranges
1½ teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon orange-flower water
¼ cup mint leaves, finely sliced

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the carrots in a bowl with 1 tablespoon of the oil, the cinnamon, cumin and salt to season. Stir well to combine and place on an oven tray lined with baking paper or a silicone sheet and roast for 40 minutes or until the carrots are tender.

Meanwhile, mix together in a large bowl the juice of 1 orange with the remaining olive oil, the sugar and orange-flower water. Peel the remaining oranges and slice thinly.

When the carrots are cooked, place in the bowl with the dressing. I like to add the carrots while still warm as this helps them take up the flavours of the dressing. Set aside until ready to serve (the salad can be served warm or cold). Add the orange slices and mint, and mix to combine. Taste and adjust the seasonings if necessary and serve on a platter.



ROAST LEG OF LAMB
WITH RAS EL-HANOUT,
ROASTED CARROT
& ORANGE SALAD





SLOW-COOKED SALMON WITH SPICED TOMATO SAUCE & CORIANDER

ROAST PORK SCOTCH FILLET WITH FENNEL & PLUMS

SERVES 10-15

I think pork Scotch fillet is much underrated – the fat marbled through the meat keeps it wonderfully moist and tender. You'll need to order the pork ahead from your butcher. Start this dish the day before to ensure a crisp crackling.

2.5kg piece pork Scotch fillet, skin on
olive oil for rubbing
1 tablespoon fennel seeds, toasted and ground
1 teaspoon sea salt
4 cloves garlic
1 bulb fennel, thinly sliced and fronds reserved and chopped
2 large leeks (white part only), thinly sliced
1 cup dry white wine
600g plums, halved and stones removed

Score the skin of the pork at 1cm intervals through the fat (but not the flesh). Pour boiling water over the skin (this helps to open up the cuts). Dry well then refrigerate uncovered. The dry air in the refrigerator will help to dry out the skin. Ideally leave overnight or for at least 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 220°C.

Smear the skin of the pork with a small amount of olive oil. Then mix 1 teaspoon of the ground fennel seeds with the sea salt and rub into the skin of the pork.

Mash the garlic cloves to a paste (add a little salt if necessary) and mix with the remaining ground fennel and chopped fennel fronds. Rub this mixture over the flesh (not the skin) of the pork.

Place the thinly sliced fennel bulb, leeks and wine in a roasting dish, and place the pork on top of the vegetables skin-side up.

Roast for 20 minutes then lower the oven temperature to 180°C and cook for 1½ hours. After 30 minutes add the plums to the pan.

Remove from the oven and allow to rest for 30 minutes before serving. If the skin hasn't crisped up enough, remove from the meat, return to the oven and finish under a grill while the meat is resting.

Carve the meat and place on a platter alongside the fennel, leeks and plums. Serve with the strained pan juices.

Wine A rich, rounded Gisborne Chardonnay.

ROAST CHICKENS WITH QUINOA STUFFING

SERVES 10 -12

A simple roast chicken is always popular. Here I've made a gluten-free stuffing with quinoa in what is really a variation on a typical bread stuffing. I haven't made proper gravy – instead the cooking liquid becomes a thin sauce which is reduced and thickened to the desired consistency. If you'd prefer to make a bread stuffing, use 3 cups of fresh breadcrumbs. Ensure you rinse the quinoa thoroughly to remove any of the naturally occurring bitter-tasting compounds.

For the stuffing

1 cup quinoa, well rinsed in warm water
2 cups chicken stock
3 tablespoons currants
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium onion, finely diced
4 rashers streaky bacon, chopped
1 tablespoon chopped fresh marjoram
6 sage leaves, finely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

After rinsing the quinoa thoroughly in warm water, strain through a fine sieve. Place in a saucepan with the chicken stock, bring to the boil then lower the heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until all the stock is absorbed. Spread the quinoa on a wide baking tray to cool.

Soak the currants in 2 tablespoons of boiling water for 20 minutes. Drain.

Heat the olive oil in a small frying pan, add the onion and bacon, and sauté until the onions are soft. Set aside to cool before using.

Mix together the quinoa, currants, onion mixture and the remaining ingredients. Taste and season.

For the chickens

2 large free-range chickens, excess fat removed and cleaned
sea salt to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil
juice of 1 lemon
12 shallots, peeled
5 fresh bay leaves
2 cups chicken stock, white wine or water

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Season the chicken cavities with salt and fill with the stuffing. There will be too much stuffing for the birds so wrap the rest in an oiled tinfoil parcel and bake alongside the chickens. Secure the chickens' cavities with toothpicks or sew up then truss the birds with string. Rub the outsides with olive oil and squeeze the lemon juice over. Season generously with salt.

Place in a roasting dish breast-side down with the shallots, bay leaves and stock, wine or water. Roast for 45 minutes then turn the chickens over and roast for a further 45 minutes. The juices should run clear when a skewer is inserted in the thickest part of the thigh. Place the chickens on a platter with the shallots and extra stuffing. Discard the bay leaves and rest the meat in a warm place.

Skim any fat from the liquid in the roasting dish and simmer to reduce until it thickens slightly. Pour into a warmed jug for serving.

Wine A Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon blend, Australian or local.



ROAST PORK SCOTCH FILLET
WITH FENNEL & PLUMS



MUSHROOM-STUFFED BEEF FILLET WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE

SERVES 12-15

Fillet of beef is always a crowd pleaser and stuffing the beef makes it very elegant. If it seems too much of a fiddle, forget the stuffing and just make the mushroom sauce, using the full amount of porcini in the sauce.

To stuff the beef

20g dried porcini
50g butter, cut into 4 pieces
2 shallots, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped
400g Portobello mushrooms, finely chopped
½ cup fresh breadcrumbs
sea salt to taste
1.6kg beef fillet, trimmed of fat

Soak the porcini in 1 cup of boiling water for 20 minutes. Strain, reserving the soaking liquid. Finely chop the porcini then set aside half the porcini and half the soaking liquid for the mushroom sauce.

Heat a large wide frying pan over low heat. Add 2 pieces of butter then the shallots and garlic, and fry gently until soft without colouring. Add the porcini and thyme, cook for 5 minutes then add the soaking liquid and simmer to reduce by half. Remove from the pan and set aside.

In 2 batches, cook the mushrooms in the remaining butter until dark with no liquid. Combine with the shallot mix, stir in the breadcrumbs and season to taste. Set aside to cool.

I find the easiest way to stuff the beef is to cut an insert with a sharp knife into one end of the fillet then use a clean knife steel to force a hole through the centre of the beef. I then place the stuffing in a piping bag with a large nozzle and use this to stuff the meat.

Tie the meat firmly with kitchen string, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours (or you can do this a day ahead). However, you could slit open the beef, place the filling along the centre, roll the beef back over then tie firmly and wrap.

Mushroom Sauce

50g butter
600g Portobello mushrooms, cleaned, stalks removed and thinly sliced
2 shallots, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 cup beef stock
1 cup red wine
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat a large wide frying pan and add half the butter then cook the mushrooms in 2 batches until dark with no liquid remaining. Set aside.

Melt the remaining butter and add the shallots and garlic, and fry gently until soft without colouring. Add the reserved chopped porcini and cook for 5 minutes then add the reserved soaking liquid and reduce by half. Return the mushrooms back to the pan and add the beef stock and red wine. Simmer to reduce the liquid by half. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

To cook the beef

olive oil for rubbing
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Rub a little olive oil over the beef and season well with salt and pepper. Heat a large sauté pan or a grill plate until hot and quickly sear the beef on all sides. Transfer to a baking tray and roast for 20-25 minutes (for medium rare). Remove from the oven, cover loosely with baking paper and a clean tea towel and place in a warm spot to rest for 15 minutes.

Carve into thin slices and arrange on a platter. Serve the warm sauce alongside the beef.

Wine A Bordeaux blend that has a healthy dose of Cabernet Franc.

Credits: Turin round and rectangular platter, Hansen large platter, Elsham platter, Novak vase and Spin tumbler all from Country Road; wooden table and ceramic bowls from Republic Home; pewter and glass bowl, checked scarf and silver placemat from Citta; antique crystal glasses, decanter, carving sets and patterned plates from Antiques of Epsom; glass door handles, wooden beads and French linen tablecloth from Madder & Rouge; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



MUSHROOM-STUFFED BEEF FILLET WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE

THE LAST TEMPTATION

Fiona Smith's stunning desserts make a photo-worthy finish

A special dessert is a highlight of the Christmas meal. I like desserts that look impressive and taste delicious, but for which the bulk of the preparation is done well in advance – preferably days – with only a little to do at the last minute. Beautiful cherries and berries are in season and, along with the gem-like pomegranate seeds I've used with one of the desserts here, add festive colour. You can serve big bowls of these, fresh, alongside all these desserts.



THREE MILK CAKE WITH POMEGRANATE & PISTACHIO
recipe page 82

Opposite: **STRAWBERRY SEMIFREDDO BAKED ALASKAS**
recipe page 78



RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY FIONA SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON McLEAN
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

STRAWBERRY SEMIFREDDO BAKED ALASKAS

MAKES 6

The semifreddo part of this recipe can be done days in advance, then just before serving the individual semifreddos are turned out of their moulds, covered with meringue and baked until golden. By the time they are baked, they will be soft enough to eat. The vodka is included in the recipe so the semifreddo doesn't set too firmly; you won't taste it.

The biscuits for the bases of the alaskas can also be made ahead and stored in an airtight container.

50g butter
250g caster sugar
1 small egg
1 teaspoon vanilla paste or extract
75g flour
25g cornflour
½ teaspoon baking powder
600g strawberries, hulled
100g icing sugar
1 tablespoon vodka
400ml cream
3 egg whites

For the biscuit bases, preheat the oven to 190°C. Beat together the butter and 50g of the caster sugar until pale and creamy. Add the egg, 1/2 teaspoon of the vanilla then fold in the sifted dry ingredients.

Put dessertspoonfuls of the mixture on trays lined with baking paper. Spread out to just under the size of the mould. Bake for 12 minutes until light golden. Remove from the trays and place on wire racks to cool. Store in an airtight container until required.

Place 350g of the strawberries in a food processor with the icing sugar and vodka, and blend to a purée. Place in a bowl with the cream and whisk to soft peaks.

Line 6 x 200ml dariole moulds, ramekins or cups with plastic wrap. Fill with the strawberry mixture then press a biscuit on top of each, flat side up. Freeze for at least 8 hours.

When ready to serve, preheat the oven to 200°C. Halve the remaining strawberries, place in a bowl and mix with 2 tablespoons of the caster sugar.

For the meringue, whisk the egg whites to soft peaks then whisk in the remaining ½ teaspoon of vanilla paste and the remaining 180g of caster sugar 1 tablespoon at a time until the mixture is stiff and glossy.

Remove the semifreddos from the freezer and unmould on to a baking tray lined with baking paper. Using a small spatula or knife, completely cover each with meringue. Bake for 4 minutes until golden. Serve immediately with the strawberries.

BLACKBERRY KING CAKE

SERVES 12-16

The French king cake is eaten just after Christmas to draw the kings to the Epiphany, so the tradition goes. And whoever finds the trinket or bean that is baked inside gets special privileges for the day, like being a king. I have added blackberries to my version, but blueberries or raspberries would also work well.

250g blanched almonds
150g unsalted butter, softened
175g caster sugar
2 tablespoons flour
4 eggs
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
900g flaky puff pastry
250g blackberries
1 large dried bean
crème fraîche or vanilla ice-cream to serve

Place the almonds in a food processor and grind to fine crumbs. Set aside.

Put the butter and sugar in a bowl, beat until pale and creamy then add the flour and mix. Beat in 3 eggs, one at a time, then the vanilla extract and finally the ground almonds.

Roll out half the pastry on a floured surface into a 30cm round, trimming to make it neat. Spread the almond mixture over the pastry, leaving a 3cm edge. Top with the blackberries and place the bean somewhere near the edge of the filling.

Roll out the remaining pastry to a 35cm round. Wet the edges of the bottom pastry with a little water then place the second pastry round over the top, trimming to fit if necessary. Using a fork, press the edges to form a firm seal.

With a small knife, score a decorative pattern in the pastry, being careful not to cut through. Make a little hole in the centre for the steam to escape. Chill for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Beat the remaining egg and brush this over the top of the cake.

Bake the cake for 20 minutes until golden. Serve cold or warm (not hot - the filling will ooze everywhere) with crème fraîche or ice-cream and watch out for the bean.

The French king cake is traditionally eaten just after Christmas to draw the kings to the Epiphany





BLACKBERRY KING CAKE

Believed to have been inspired by Florence's Duomo, zuccotto is a wonderful dessert for a festive occasion



POACHED CHERRY ZUCCOTTO

SERVES 8-10

Believed to have been inspired by Florence's Duomo, zuccotto is a wonderful dessert for a festive occasion. Make it up to three days in advance – it improves with time.

4 medium eggs
150g caster sugar
pinch of salt
100g flour
30g cocoa
½ teaspoon baking powder
25g butter, melted
500g cherries, stones removed
⅓ cup sugar
juice of 1 orange
3 tablespoons Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur or brandy
200g ricotta
100g mascarpone
4 tablespoons icing sugar
¼ cup finely chopped candied orange peel
200ml cream

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Butter a 30cm x 20cm Swiss roll tin and line the base with baking paper.

In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, sugar and salt until thick and pale. Sift the flour, cocoa and baking powder together over the mixture and gently fold in then fold in the butter. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 15 minutes. Turn out and cool on a rack.

Put the cherries in a saucepan with the sugar and orange juice. Cover and simmer over a very low heat for 10 minutes until tender. Strain the cherries and set aside, reserving the juice. When the juice is cool, add 2 tablespoons of the Grand Marnier and set aside.

Line a 6-7 cup pudding basin or bowl with plenty of plastic wrap. Cut the sponge into long triangular pieces, setting aside a round piece to cover the top, and use to line the inside of the basin. Moisten the sponge, including the piece for the top, with the reserved cherry juice.

Place the ricotta, mascarpone, 3 tablespoons of the icing sugar and the remaining tablespoon of Grand Marnier in a bowl and beat until smooth. Fold in the orange peel and half the poached cherries. Spread this mixture over the sponge.

Place the remaining cherries and icing sugar in a food processor and blend to a purée. Whisk the cream to just beyond soft peaks (it should be firm but not overwhipped).

Place the cherry purée in a bowl and fold in the whipped cream. Fill the centre of the sponge with this mixture. Place the remaining piece of sponge on the top then cover with plastic wrap and chill for up to 3 days.

Turn out on to a plate to serve.



THREE MILK CAKE WITH POMEGRANATE & PISTACHIO

SERVES 6-8

Recently I enjoyed the three milk cake at Neil Perry's Spice Temple in Sydney. This is my version and it makes a beautiful Christmas dessert with its heroic marshmallow topping, and red pomegranate seeds and green pistachios. I have based the cake on Cindy Pawlcyn's version in *Big Small Plates*. I use a very wide loaf tin as the cake then cuts into 6-8 even squares. Start this recipe at least a day ahead.

For the cake
225g flour
¼ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
5 large eggs, separated
225g caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons lemon juice
½ cup full-cream milk

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Butter a 21cm x 12cm loaf or cake tin and line the base with baking paper.

Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt.

Place the egg whites in a large bowl and whisk to firm peaks with a cake mixer or electric beater. While still whisking, gradually add the sugar. Turn the motor to the lowest speed and whisk in the egg yolks, vanilla and lemon juice. Fold in the flour mix and the milk. Spoon into the tin and bake for 40 minutes until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.

For the three milks
200ml condensed milk
150ml cream
150ml full-cream milk

Combine all the ingredients in a jug. Turn the baked cake on to a wire rack and cool for about 10 minutes. Cut off the dark sides of the cake and discard. Place the cake in a dish slightly bigger than the cake and poke holes in the top with a skewer. Pour half the milk mix over, reserving the remainder. Cool then cover and refrigerate overnight to soak up the milks.

For the marshmallow topping
2 egg whites
125g caster sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon rosewater
2 sheets leaf gelatine (or 1½ teaspoons powdered)
125ml boiling water

Whisk the egg whites to firm peaks then gradually whisk in the sugar and finally the lemon juice and rosewater.

Soak the leaf gelatine in a dish of cold water for 2 minutes. Squeeze out the excess moisture then dissolve the gelatine (or add the powdered here) in the boiling water. Slowly pour the gelatine into the egg mixture while whisking. Continue whisking until the mix is cool and firm (about 8 minutes).

Pile the marshmallow mixture on top of the cake. It doesn't matter if the sides are uneven as you can tidy these up after it has set. Chill for at least 1 hour or for up to a day.

To serve
½ cup pomegranate seeds
½ cup (70g) pistachios, lightly roasted and chopped

Remove the cake from the refrigerator 30 minutes before serving. Using a knife dipped in hot water, tidy up the sides of the marshmallow if desired then cut the cake into 6-8 pieces. Place each in a bowl and pour in a little extra three-milk mix. Sprinkle with pomegranate seeds and pistachios.

HAZELNUT & ALMOND NOUGAT ROLL

SERVES 8

This delicate sponge is filled with nougat cream made with ground brittle almond nougat or turrón, a Spanish nougat. You have to make and fill the roll on the same day, but then it keeps refrigerated for up to four days.

50g hazelnuts, roasted and skinned
4 eggs
150g caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
pinch of salt
100g flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
25g butter, melted
100g brittle almond nougat or turrón
200ml cream, whipped to soft peaks
60ml nut liqueur such as Frangelico or amaretto
icing sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Butter a 30cm x 20cm Swiss roll tin and line the base with baking paper.

Finely grind the hazelnuts in a food processor then set aside.

In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, sugar and salt until thick and pale. Sift the flour and baking powder together over the mixture and gently fold in with the ground hazelnuts. Fold in the butter. Spoon into the prepared tin and bake for 15 minutes.

Sprinkle a large piece of baking paper with caster sugar and tip the sponge out on to this. While the sponge is still warm, very carefully roll up loosely into a log shape. Cool.

Break the nougat into pieces, place in a food processor and grind to a coarse crumb. Fold into the whipped cream. Carefully unroll the sponge, sprinkle with the liqueur then spread with the cream and roll up. Dust with icing sugar before serving. ✪



Credits: Silver candelabra, white ceramic plate, silver cake stand, beads and other Christmas decorations from French Country Collections; Normann Copenhagen lampshade from Design Denmark; metallic wallpaper from Netti & Gee; Spiegelau Diamonds bowl, Christofle Element & Origine Matt cutlery, Rosenthal Vibrations plate, Bernardaud Dune plate, Thomas Medallion plate and Rosenthal Vibrations silver vase from The Studio of Tableware; Bond cutlery from Nest; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.

HAZELNUT & ALMOND NOUGAT ROLL





PANFRIED DUCK BREAST WITH RICE NOODLES, ASPARAGUS & GREEN BEANS

missionstatement

Ray McVinnie prepares everyday meals with plenty of punch

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY McVINNIE / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT / STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

This time of year is one when my main culinary concern will be thinking about entertaining over the holiday period. I enjoy Christmas and all it entails for the cook. I get to make those favourite dishes I only have at this time of year, because foods such as roast turkey and plum pudding are the special dishes that mean Christmas to me.

While I enjoy all of this, the need to produce family meals doesn't diminish - but they can still be done with flair. All cooks want to expand their repertoire of delicious dishes that become family classics - the sort of dishes that, after making a couple of times, you don't even need the recipes beside you and are flexible enough for you to instantly recognise what should and shouldn't be changed or substituted. Here are a few of my own favourites.



BRAISED CHICKEN & RICE SALAD WITH TOMATO DRESSING
recipe page 88



All cooks want to expand their repertoire of delicious dishes that become family classics

PANFRIED DUCK BREAST WITH RICE NOODLES, ASPARAGUS & GREEN BEANS

SERVES 6

If you can't get your hands on duck breasts, use pork rump steak, boned pork chops or pork Scotch fillet.

¼ cup fresh lime juice
3 tablespoons fish sauce
2 tablespoons sesame oil
pinch of chilli flakes
2 teaspoons sugar
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons soybean oil
4 duck breasts (about 200g each), skin cut almost down to the flesh in a criss-cross pattern
375g Thai rice noodles (also called rice sticks)
200g green beans
400g asparagus, coarse ends snapped off and spears halved
¼ cup each mint and coriander leaves and dill sprigs
3 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

For the dressing, put the lime juice, fish sauce, sesame oil, chilli and sugar in a small bowl and mix well until the sugar dissolves. Taste and if necessary balance the sweet (the sugar), salty (the fish sauce), sour (the lime juice) and hot (the chilli) flavours by adding more of what is necessary so none dominates. Reserve.

Place a large saucepan of water on high heat and bring to the boil ready for the noodles. Place another saucepan with less water in on to boil for the asparagus and beans.

Combine the garlic and soybean oil, and rub all over the duck. Heat a frying pan over moderate heat and add the duck breasts, side by side and skin-side down. Fry gently for 8 minutes until well browned (be careful as they burn easily) then turn over and fry for 4 minutes on the flesh side. Remove from the heat and rest in a warm place for 5 minutes.

Drop the noodles into the saucepan of boiling water, bring back to the boil and boil for 4 minutes until tender. Remove from the heat, drain well and divide among 6 bowls.

Drop the asparagus and beans into the other saucepan of water, bring back to the boil and boil for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and drain. Serve the vegetables on top of the noodles.

Thinly slice the duck breasts across the grain of the meat and divide among the bowls, placing the duck on the vegetables. Pour a little of the dressing over everything. Top with the herbs and sesame seeds and serve.

Wine A Central Otago Pinot Noir.

STEAK WITH OYSTERS, CRUSHED POTATOES & PICKLED SAVOY CABBAGE

SERVES 6

If you don't like oysters, leave them out and just make the white wine sauce.

¼ small Savoy cabbage, very thinly sliced and thick stalks discarded
2 tablespoons salt
½ cup cider vinegar
2 teaspoons sugar
pinch of chilli flakes
3 tablespoons coarsely chopped flat-leafed parsley
800g small new potatoes, well scrubbed
6 tablespoons butter
1 large shallot, finely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped chervil
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
800g piece beef sirloin, eye fillet, Scotch fillet or rump steak (I used eye fillet), fat and sinew removed
12 shucked oysters and their juice
150ml dry white wine





STEAK WITH OYSTERS, CRUSHED POTATOES & PICKLED SAVOY CABBAGE

ON THE KIWI MENU

Rabbit, hare, deer (red, fallow, rusa, sambar, sika, whitetail, wapiti), **thar, chamois, wallaby, duck** (mallard, paradise, spoonbill), **pheasant, quail, chukka, swan, Canadian geese, pukeko, peacock, goat, boar, turkey**

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Place the cabbage in a large non-reactive bowl. Add the 2 tablespoons of salt. Mix very well with your hands, weight lightly with a couple of plates and set aside for 30 minutes.

Remove the plates and rinse the cabbage well in cold water then squeeze dry. Place in a clean bowl and add the vinegar, sugar, chilli and 2 tablespoons of the parsley. Mix well, taste, season and reserve.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Boil the potatoes in a large saucepan of salted water until tender. Remove from the heat, drain well and allow to steam dry.

Put the potatoes in a warm serving bowl and crush lightly but don't mash. Add 3 tablespoons of the butter, the remaining parsley, the shallot and chervil. Mix well, taste and season. Cover and keep warm.

Mix the olive oil, the 1 teaspoon of black pepper and the garlic together and rub all over the beef.

Heat a frying pan over high heat and brown the beef all over. Place the steak in a roasting dish in the oven for 15 minutes for medium rare. Remove from the oven and rest for 5 minutes. Place the frying pan on the heat and add 1 tablespoon of the butter, add the drained oysters and fry gently until the oysters colour. Transfer the oysters to a bowl.

Turn up the heat, add the wine and let it bubble for 30 seconds. Add the oyster juices and the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and stir as it dissolves. Taste and season.



Slice the steak and serve it on the potatoes with the oysters and sauce over it and the cabbage on the side.
Wine A Hawke's Bay Cabernet Sauvignon.

HOT-SMOKED SALMON KEDGEREE WITH CUCUMBER & HERB SALAD

SERVES 6

2 cups very well-washed basmati rice
750ml milk
1 small onion, peeled and halved
1 bay leaf
4 cloves
1 cinnamon stick
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
3 tablespoons cornflour, mixed to a paste with 4 tablespoons water
large pinch of chilli flakes
4 tablespoons chopped parsley
3 teaspoons toasted cumin seeds
zest of 1 lemon
salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons butter
400g hot-smoked salmon, skinned, boned and broken into bite-sized chunks
6 eggs, placed in a saucepan of cold water, brought to the boil, boiled 8 minutes then cooled under cold running water, shelled and quartered
2 spring onions, thinly sliced
100ml plain unsweetened yoghurt
1 cucumber, peeled and cut into irregular bite-sized chunks
2 tablespoons each chopped chives, and torn basil and mint leaves
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Place the rice in a saucepan and cover with water to come 2cm above the level of the rice. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down to the lowest setting, cover and cook for 20 minutes without uncovering for any reason.

Remove from the heat and let stand without uncovering for 5 minutes. Uncover and fluff up the rice with a fork. Set aside to cool.

Put the milk, onion, bay leaf, cloves, cinnamon stick and turmeric in a saucepan. Slowly bring to the boil and stir in enough of the cornflour mixture so you have a thin white sauce with the consistency of liquid cream. Strain out the onion and spices and discard. Add the chilli flakes, parsley, cumin seeds and zest, taste and season well. Reserve.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Use 1 tablespoon of the butter to butter the base of a shallow ovenproof dish.

Place half the rice in an even layer on the bottom of the dish. Spread the salmon, boiled eggs and spring onions over the rice and pour in half the sauce to cover.

Put the remaining rice in an even layer on top and pour the remaining sauce over. Dot the top with the remaining butter and place in the oven for 30 minutes or until bubbling and golden.

Just before serving, combine the yoghurt, cucumber, chives, basil, mint and lemon juice. Taste, season well and serve with the kedgeree.
Wine A Pinot Noir or Riesling.

BRAISED CHICKEN & RICE SALAD WITH TOMATO DRESSING

SERVES 6

To joint a chicken into 10 pieces, cut the wing tips off and cut through the breast and either side of the backbone. Cut the leg off each half and cut each leg into thigh and drumstick. Cut the wings off the breasts and cut each breast in half. This gives you 10 pieces of chicken.

6 small ripe tomatoes, cored and coarsely chopped
2 spring onions, thinly sliced
3 tablespoons chopped flat-leafed parsley
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
75ml extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup basil leaves, torn in half, plus extra for serving
salt and freshly ground black pepper
size 14 free-range chicken, cut into 10 pieces
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tablespoon very finely chopped rosemary
50ml white wine
200ml chicken stock
1 tablespoon brown sugar
2 cups long-grain white rice, well washed and drained
2 handfuls baby cos lettuce leaves
1 handful rocket leaves

HOT-SMOKED SALMON KEDGEREE WITH CUCUMBER & HERB SALAD



While I enjoy Christmas, the need to produce family meals doesn't diminish – but they can still be done with flair



Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Put the tomatoes, spring onions, parsley, vinegar, extra virgin olive oil and basil leaves in a bowl. Mix well, taste and season. Reserve.

Place the pieces of chicken skin-side up in a roasting dish just big enough to hold them and sprinkle the olive oil, garlic and rosemary over the top. Season well and rub everything all over the chicken. Pour the wine and stock around the chicken and sprinkle the sugar over the skin of the chicken. Place in the oven for 30 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and well browned.

Remove the chicken from the pan and keep warm. Skim the fat off the pan juices, place the dish over high heat and boil until the pan juices are slightly syrupy. Reserve.

While the chicken is cooking, place the rice in a saucepan and cover with water to 2cm above the level of the rice. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat to the lowest setting. Cover tightly and cook for 20 minutes without uncovering for any reason. Remove from the heat and let stand, still covered, for 5 minutes. Uncover, fluff up the rice with a fork and, if not using immediately, re-cover and reserve. It will stay hot for 20 minutes.

Place the rice on a warm serving platter. Top with the cos, rocket and chicken, and pour the pan juices over the top. Spoon the tomato mixture over everything, sprinkle with extra basil leaves and serve.

Wine A light, lively Marlborough Chardonnay.

LAMB, LEMON, SPINACH & BARLEY STEW

SERVES 6

The cup of barley in this recipe is enough to create a thick, creamy risotto-like stew.

3 tablespoons olive oil
1kg boned lamb shoulder, diced 4cm
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped oregano leaves
peel of ½ preserved lemon, finely diced
1 fresh bay leaf
1 onion, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely diced
2 sticks celery, thinly sliced
100ml dry white wine
1 cup pearl barley, well rinsed and drained
750ml chicken stock
500ml water
3 handfuls baby spinach leaves
4 tablespoons lemon juice, plus extra wedges for squeezing
salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons each chopped parsley and mint

Heat the oil over high heat in a wide deep metal pan and brown the lamb pieces in batches so the pan isn't crowded. Remove the lamb to a bowl and reserve.

Reduce the heat and add the garlic, oregano, preserved lemon peel, bay leaf, onion, carrot and celery. Fry gently, without browning, for 10 minutes. Return the lamb to the pan, add the wine and let it bubble for 30 seconds. Add the barley, stock and water, and mix well.

Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 45 minutes or until the lamb and barley are very tender. Add the spinach and mix well so it wilts then add the lemon juice, taste and season.

Stir in the parsley and mint, and serve the stew with lemon wedges if desired.

Wine An Aussie Shiraz Viognier. ✪

Credits: Handmade ceramic plates, bottles, salt dish, tumblers and jugs made by Bob Steiner Ceramics; charcoal tumblers and amber tealight holder from Nood; Cutipol Ebony cutlery, salt and pepper shakers, Zassenhaus Berlin salt grinder, iittala dinner plates and iittala Kartio pitcher from The Studio of Tableware; ceramic decorative plate from Artedomus; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



LAMB, LEMON, SPINACH
& BARLEY STEW



FRESH RASPBERRY & LIME SIDECAR

opposite page
CRAYFISH PANZANELLA SALAD WITH ROCKET & BASIL MAYONNAISE

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY AL BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

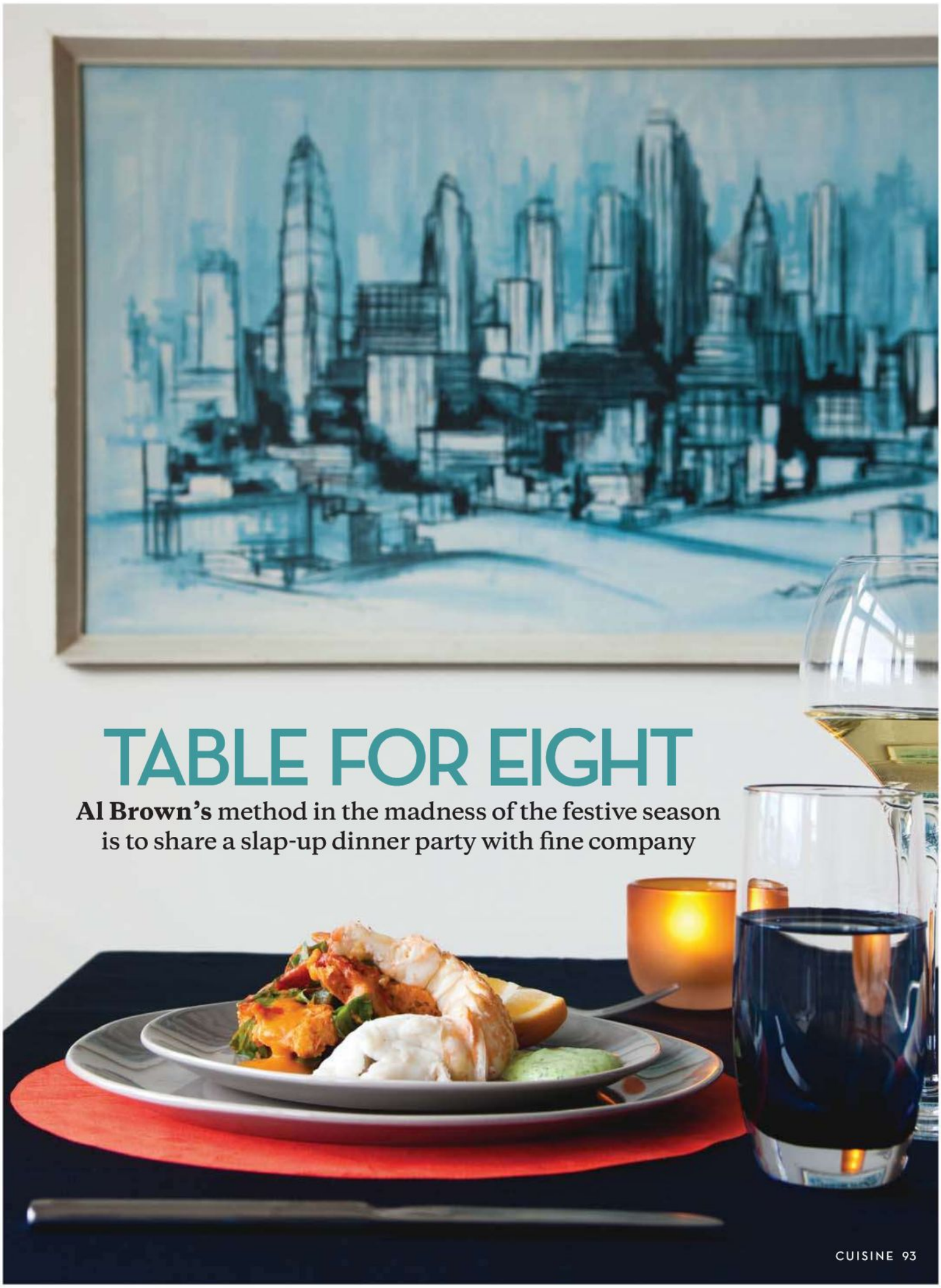


TABLE FOR EIGHT

Al Brown's method in the madness of the festive season is to share a slap-up dinner party with fine company



As all my family and close friends can attest, Christmas is not my favourite time of the year. I find it all gets a bit hectic as we try to cram in so much before Christmas Day. Quality not quantity has always been my mantra, which probably explains my lack of interest in the many and often high-octane social gatherings at this time of year.

What I do enjoy each December is farming the kids out to yet another Father Christmas do so we can entertain our closest of friends and have a genuine three or four hours around the table, catching up on the year's comings and goings, and celebrating with good food, wine and great company.

There is one other great thing about Christmas to me - the day after signals the start of a wonderful summer break filled with all the things I love: family camping holidays, dawn and dusk fishing adventures and spending long leisurely days exploring new and exciting parts of our wonderful coastline and country. So, Merry Christmas. I hope it's a good one!

FRESH RASPBERRY & LIME SIDECARS

SERVES 8

This is my own version of the classic Sidecar cocktail. There seem to be many "original" versions, usually containing cognac, but the common perception is a cocktail with a nice balance of sweet and sour. Fresh raspberries and fresh lime juice work a treat together. Add some wonderful world-class spirits and watch the fun dial move steadily upwards.

250g fresh raspberries (frozen make a good second choice)
200ml vodka (I use 42 Below)
250ml Chambord (black raspberry liqueur)
150ml Cointreau
2 tablespoons sugar syrup (made with half sugar and half water)
juice of 4 limes
1 litre sparkling water (I use Antipodes)
2 limes for garnish (optional)

Add a couple of ice cubes to each glass, followed by half a dozen raspberries. Top with another couple of ice cubes.

Place more ice in a large jug. Add the vodka, Chambord, Cointreau, syrup, lime juice and sparkling water. Stir then strain and pour into the chilled glasses.

Garnish with a squeezed wedge of fresh lime or a piece of twisted lime zest, if using.

SMOKED KAHAWAI BRUSCHETTA WITH CRÈME FRAÎCHE & CHIMICHURRI

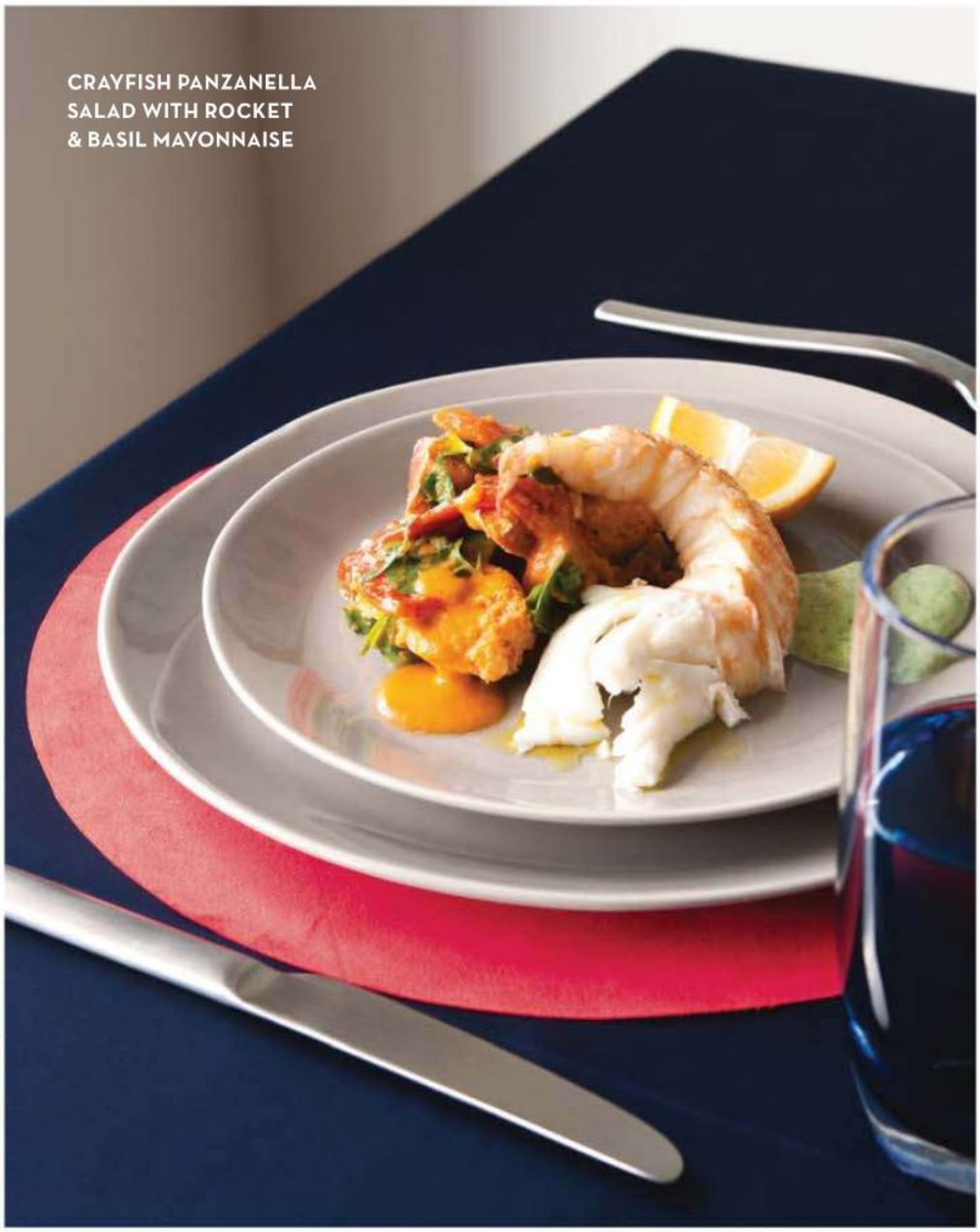
SERVES 8

My predinner canapés are never overworked pieces of art. Usually they take a similar form to this. A simple bruschetta base makes a platform for so many different ingredients and always adds that terrific textural contrast to the topping.

The smokiness of the kahawai is mellowed with the crème fraîche, then the small dollop of chimichurri - an Argentinian version of salsa verde - on top gives a nice kick.



SMOKED KAHAWAI BRUSCHETTA WITH
CRÈME FRAÎCHE & CHIMICHURRI



CRAYFISH PANZANELLA SALAD WITH ROCKET & BASIL MAYONNAISE

Chimichurri

1 cup tightly packed fresh parsley leaves
1½ cups tightly packed fresh coriander leaves and stalks
½ cup tightly packed fresh oregano leaves
1 clove garlic
1 tablespoon toasted cumin seeds, ground
pinch of chilli flakes
100ml olive oil
50ml red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place all the ingredients in a food processor and blitz to a coarse paste. Taste and season with sea salt and pepper. Refrigerate until required.

Smoked Kahawai Bruschetta

1 loaf ciabatta or baguette or similar
extra virgin olive oil for brushing
300g skinned and boned smoked kahawai (or other smoked fish)
100g crème fraîche
juice of 1 lemon
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 limes, halved (optional)

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Cut the bread into 5mm-thick slices. Brush both sides with oil and place on an oven tray. Place in the oven and cook until slightly golden. Remove from the oven and cool on a rack. If not using immediately, store in an airtight container.

Break up the smoked kahawai between your fingers and place in a bowl. Add the crème fraîche and a squeeze of lemon juice to taste. Mix together with a wooden spoon until well combined then season with sea salt and fresh black pepper. Refrigerate until required.

To serve, spoon the kahawai mix on to the bruschetta and top each with a little chimichurri. Arrange on a platter with the fresh lime halves, if using.

CRAYFISH PANZANELLA SALAD WITH ROCKET & BASIL MAYONNAISE

SERVES 8

Panzanella, the classic Italian salad made with stale bread, is a great favourite of mine. Served just by itself it is delicious, but the addition of some chilled crayfish takes this peasant salad up a culinary notch or two. The rocket and basil mayo gives the dish a fresh peppery finish.

Rocket & Basil Mayonnaise

1 cup mayonnaise (homemade or best-quality bought)
1 cup basil leaves
2 cups rocket leaves

In a small blender, food processor or the tall cup accessory of a wand blender, place a couple of tablespoons of mayonnaise and all the basil and rocket then top with another couple of tablespoons of mayonnaise. Blitz the herbs and mayonnaise to a rich green paste.

Place the rest of the mayonnaise in a small bowl and fold the herb paste through until combined. Refrigerate until required.

For the dressing

500g tomatoes, blanched, peeled and seeded
1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
3 tablespoons sherry vinegar
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 teaspoon sugar
100ml extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a blender or similar, place the tomatoes, garlic, sherry vinegar,



MISO DUCK BREAST WITH POMEGRANATE MOLASSES GLAZE & GINGER & SESAME POTATOES

tomato paste and sugar. Turn on low speed and add the olive oil in a slow, steady stream until all incorporated. Taste and season with sea salt and fresh black pepper. Refrigerate until required.

For the salad

4 x 500g cooked crayfish (either bought cooked or boiled for 5-6 minutes), chilled
½ baguette, sliced and dried out in a 100°C oven for 20-30 minutes
2 chargrilled red capsicums, peeled and seeded
2 chargrilled yellow capsicums, peeled and seeded
250g ripe tomatoes, blanched, peeled and seeded
½ cucumber, halved lengthwise and seeded
¼ cup shallots, finely sliced
1 cup coarsely chopped basil
½ cup parsley leaves
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
lemon wedges for serving

Remove the tails from the crayfish. Slice in half then extract the meat from the shells. Reserve.

Break the bodies and legs off the crayfish and remove all the meat. Coarsely chop and place in a large bowl.

Break up the dried-out bread into bite-sized pieces and add to the bowl.

Cut the capsicums, tomatoes and cucumber into bite-sized pieces and add these as well. Toss in the shallots, basil and parsley leaves.

Loosely mix the ingredients together then add the salad dressing. Mix again to combine. Taste and season with a little sea salt and fresh black pepper if necessary.

Spoon out the salad into the centre of 8 room-temperature plates.

Slice each half crayfish tail on the diagonal and arrange on or around each portion of salad.

Place a dollop of the rocket and basil mayonnaise alongside, drizzle a little extra virgin olive oil over and finish with a pinch of sea salt, a grind of fresh black pepper and lemon wedges on the side.

MISO DUCK BREASTS WITH POMEGRANATE GLAZE & GINGER & SESAME POTATOES

SERVES 8

This dish has the three great "S"s going for it: salty, sweet and sour. When balanced and working in harmony, they make a terrific combination, especially with rich and delicious duck breast.

The crisp potatoes offer textural contrast, while simply blanched fresh snow peas add some freshness to the dish. Start this a day ahead.

Miso Duck Breasts

8 duck breasts (around 150g each)
1 cup white miso
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh ginger
2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic
⅓ cup sweet sherry
⅓ cup brown sugar

Trim any excess fat off the duck breasts. With a sharp knife, score the fatty skin in a criss-cross pattern, cutting just through skin. Reserve.

In a medium-sized bowl, place the miso, ginger, garlic, sherry and sugar. Mix to combine then add the duck breasts and work the marinade into and over them. Refrigerate for at least 24 hours.

Pomegranate Glaze

¼ cup pomegranate molasses (available from specialty food stores)
¼ cup hoisin sauce
¼ cup honey
¼ cup white miso
2 tablespoons brown sugar
½ teaspoon sesame oil

Put all the ingredients in a small saucepan and place on low heat. Stir together until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and store in a jar or pottle in the refrigerator.

For the potatoes

800g small Agria potatoes, peeled
3 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh ginger
salt to taste

Place the potatoes in a suitable saucepan along with the ginger. Cover with cold water, toss in a little salt and place on high heat. Once boiling, turn down the heat and simmer. Remove from the heat when just cooked through. Strain, discard the ginger and set aside to cool.

Once cold, cut into 5mm-thick rounds. Refrigerate until required.

To cook and serve

170ml canola oil
2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh ginger
¼ cup sesame seeds, toasted
1 cup diagonally chopped spring onions
1 teaspoon sesame oil
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
400g snow peas, thinly sliced

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Place a medium saucepan filled with salted water on the heat and bring up to a rolling boil.

Place a skillet or non-stick frying pan on low heat. Remove the duck breasts from the marinade, wipe off the excess marinade with a paper towel and discard.

Put 4 of the duck breasts skin side down in the pan and cook over low heat, rendering as much of the fat away from the skin as possible. Once the skin is crisp, remove the duck breasts from the pan and repeat with the remaining breasts. Pour off the fat and reserve.

Heat up the skillet or pan to medium-high heat and return the breasts flesh side down. Cook for a minute or so before placing in the oven for 4-5 minutes. Remove and rest the breasts in a warm spot.

For the potatoes, add 125ml of the canola oil along with the rendered fat to the skillet and place on medium heat. Once the oil is hot, cook the potatoes in batches until golden and crunchy on both sides. Remove and place in a large bowl and keep warm while you repeat until all done.

In another non-stick pan, place the remaining canola oil. Place on medium heat and add the garlic and ginger. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until they begin to turn golden

To me, the perfect meringue is delicate and crisp on the outside with a slightly chewy centre



BLACKCURRANT MERINGUES
WITH CHAMBORD SEMIFREDDO



then add the sesame seeds, spring onions and sesame oil. Stir through to combine then toss over the potatoes, along with a good pinch of sea salt and black pepper.

Just before serving, drop the snow peas in the boiling water for 30 seconds then strain. Warm the pomegranate glaze over low heat.

Divide the potatoes on to warm plates. Slice the duck breasts on the diagonal and place next to the potatoes. Add the crunchy snow peas and drizzle the warm glaze over.

BLACKCURRANT MERINGUES WITH CHAMBORD SEMIFREDDO

Serves 8

I love a great meringue. As they have only three or four ingredients, you would think they were pretty simple to make. However, there is a real knack in getting them just right. I would not describe my sister Vicky as any sort of gourmet, but, boy, can she make the perfect meringue. And perfect to me in the world of meringues is delicate and crisp on the outside with a slightly chewy centre. So this is Vicky's recipe with the addition of a new product I have just come across, blackcurrant powder by Sujon, so I guess that means it's my recipe now... and yours.

Blackcurrant Meringues

4 large egg whites
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup caster sugar
1 tablespoon blackcurrant powder, plus extra for dusting (see supplier; or try toasted ground pistachios, toasted almond slivers or a little cinnamon)
1½ teaspoons cornflour
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 120°C.

Place the egg whites and salt in a cake mixer with the whisk attachment fitted. Turn the dial to full speed and whisk until the egg whites are stiff.

Slowly add the sugar a bit at a time in a steady stream. This should take at least 2-3 minutes.

When shiny, silky smooth and stiff, add the blackcurrant powder, cornflour and lemon juice. Whisk until combined then stop.

Line an oven tray with baking paper. Spoon out about 16 meringues and dust or sprinkle with around 2 teaspoons of the blackcurrant powder. Place in the oven and cook for 10 minutes at 120°C then reduce the heat to 100°C and cook a further 20 minutes. Reduce again to 80°C and cook for a further hour. Turn off the oven and leave the meringues in to cool to room temperature.

Chambord Semifreddo

3 cups raspberries (frozen are fine)
350g sugar
squeeze lemon juice
400g cream
⅓ cup water
6 egg yolks
½ teaspoon vanilla essence
150ml Chambord

Place the raspberries, 200g of the sugar and the lemon juice in a saucepan and place on medium-low heat. Stir occasionally and remove once the sugar has dissolved and the sauce is liquid, but still a little lumpy. Cool then refrigerate in a plastic container until needed.

Line a standard loaf tin with plastic wrap and place in the freezer.

Whip the cream to soft peaks then refrigerate.

Place the remaining sugar and the water in a small saucepan and place on medium heat. Once the sugar has dissolved, cook to 115°C. If you don't have a thermometer, cook for 5-7 minutes then test it is ready by dropping a little into cold water. It should hold together and be malleable when you rub it between your fingers. This is called "soft ball" stage. Remove and keep warm.

Place the egg yolks and vanilla in a cake mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Whisk until the egg yolks are pale, thick and have at least doubled in volume.

While continuing to whisk, slowly drizzle in the thick warm sugar syrup. Continue to whisk until the mixture is cold. Using a rubber scraper, tip the egg yolk sugar mix into a large mixing bowl. Fold in the whipped cream along with the Chambord.

Spoon the semifreddo into the cold loaf tin and place in the freezer to set. After an hour or so, when the semifreddo will be partially set, pour 1 cup of the raspberry sauce over (reserving the rest) and swirl with a kitchen knife so the sauce is rippled through the semifreddo. Return to the freezer to set, preferably overnight.

To serve

300ml whipped cream
250g fresh raspberries

Arrange a couple of meringues on each plate. With a hot, wet spoon, scoop out a generous spoonful of the Chambord semifreddo. Add a little raspberry sauce to each plate followed by a dollop of whipped cream. Garnish with a few fresh raspberries and serve. ✪

Supplier: For stockists of Sujon blackcurrant powder, see sujon.co.nz

Credits: London jug, Asti blue highball glasses, yellow glass tealight holders and blue ceramic platter from Country Road; Coco plates, Providore cutlery, LSA glass tealight holder and Open Up stemware from Nest; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.

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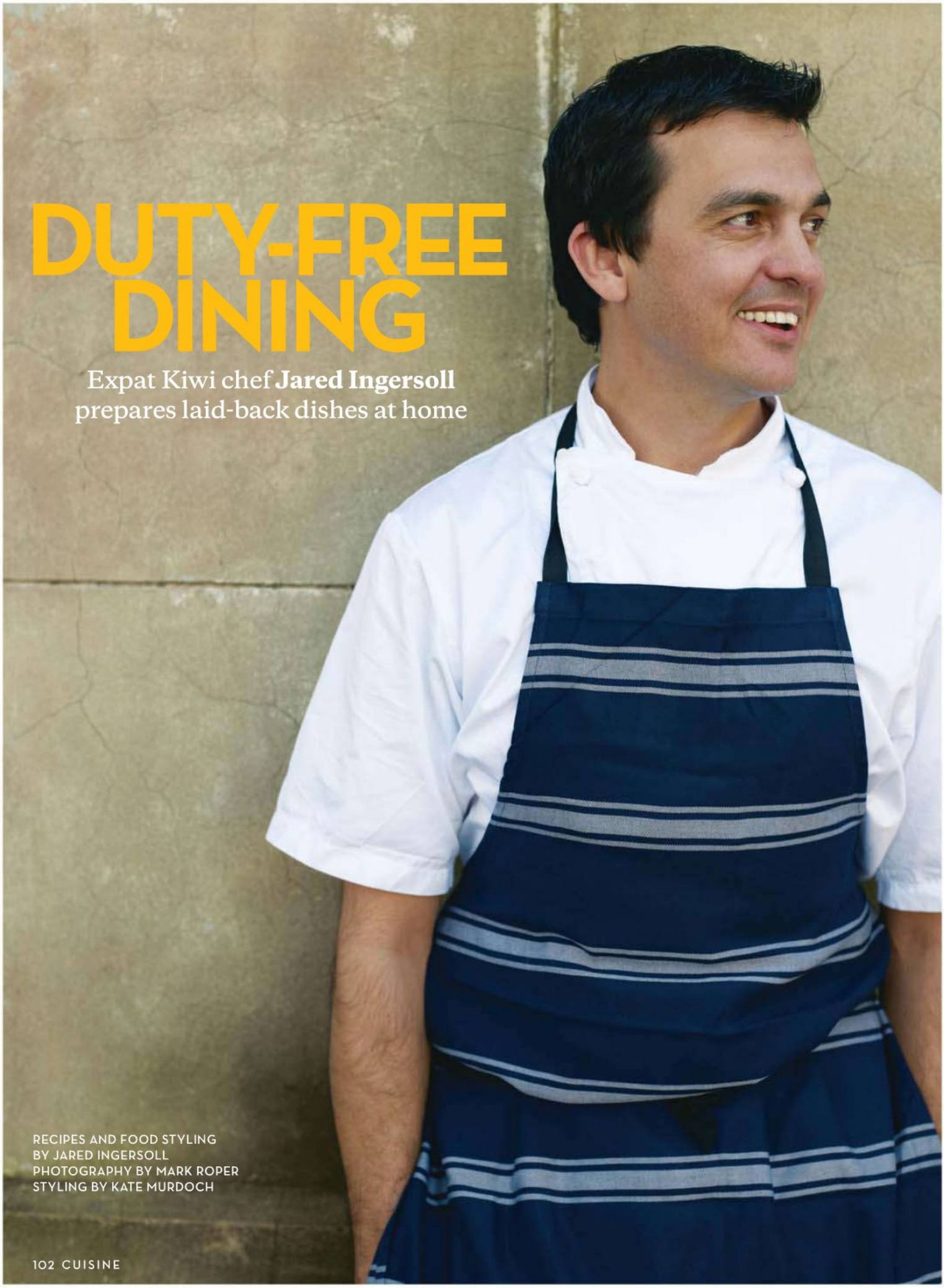
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Expat Kiwi chef **Jared Ingersoll** prepares laid-back dishes at home



RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING
BY JARED INGERSOLL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK ROPER
STYLING BY KATE MURDOCH

These are dishes that I would cook for friends at home on a lazy, relaxed day off. They are not part of a menu that requires a set order of preparation and eating. Instead they are recipes that cry out for your own interpretation. I do suggest you stick to them in detail the first time you use them to get a feel for them, but after that the sky's the limit. Remember, recipes are just like gossip – they get better after you've added your own little bits.



BARBECUE OYSTER BLADE STEAK WITH ANCHOÏADE

Remember, recipes are just like gossip – they get better after you've added your own little bits

BARBECUE OYSTER BLADE STEAK WITH ANCHOÏADE

SERVES 4-6

Anchoïade is traditionally an anchovy and garlic paste from the south of France, with variations including black olives, red capsicum and nuts. My version combines the sweetness of figs and shallots, and musky floral tones of sage which, along with the anchovies, melt deliciously into the beef.

To cook the steak, you can either cut it into thick slices then barbecue it or, as I prefer, cook it as a whole piece. The latter method takes a bit longer and you need to really watch the heat of the grill – too hot and the meat will burn before it is cooked properly.

Whichever method you use, you need to make sure you cook the meat medium rare – any less and the meat will be tough. Also, ensure you leave the meat to rest for about half the amount of time you cooked it for.

180g dried figs
10 anchovy fillets, drained
3 shallots, finely sliced
handful sage leaves, chopped
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1.2kg beef crosscut blade in 1 piece

To make the anchoïade, cover the figs in boiling water and soak until soft and cool enough to handle then drain, reserving the soaking water, and coarsely chop the figs.

In a blender, place the anchovies, shallots and sage leaves, reserving a few leaves to stir in at the end, and blend with a little of the oil to a coarse paste. Add all but a small handful of the figs and blend again, adding more oil and some of the reserved soaking water to make a thickish paste. Place in a bowl with the remaining figs and sage, and mix together. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Place the meat on a medium-high barbecue and cook for 14-18 minutes until medium rare, watching carefully that it doesn't burn. Remove from the barbecue and leave to rest for about half the time it took to cook. Serve with the anchoïade and warmed gravy if you have some on hand.

HOME-CURED BRESAOLA

SERVES ABOUT 8

A couple of things about this recipe: first, your choice of beef is important. It should be lean and very fresh. The eye of silverside from a Hereford is a good choice.

After making the recipe a couple of times, you will get a feel for things and then you can start experimenting with different cuts and playing with different fat quantities. For example, with a bit of practice, a really high-fat piece of wagyu rib cap will turn out like a salami. This bresaola takes about three weeks.

150g coarse or rock salt
1 sprig rosemary, leaves chopped and stalk discarded, plus a few extra sprigs for seasoning
2 bay leaves
3 cloves garlic
½ tablespoon freshly ground black pepper, plus extra for seasoning
½ tablespoon dried chilli flakes
4 juniper berries
2 cloves
zest and juice of 1 orange
zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 bottle red wine
500g piece lean beef

Mix together all the ingredients except the beef. Place the beef in a non-reactive container (glass is great for this) and cover with the mixture. Loosely cover the container with a piece of baking paper. Leave it to cure in the refrigerator for 4 days, turning twice a day to ensure it cures evenly.

On the fourth day, take the meat out of the mix. Taste a slice to make sure it is cured properly – it should feel noticeably firm. If not, put it back in to marinate for longer. Otherwise, rinse it in cold water and pat dry.

When the meat is ready, season it all over with the leaves of a few sprigs of rosemary and crushed black pepper then wrap in a double layer of muslin. Hang it in the fridge to dry for at least 2 weeks. A good way to do this is to tie it to the base of the middle fridge shelf over a metal tin to catch any unlikely drips.

To serve, slice the bresaola finely and drizzle with excellent extra virgin olive oil.

PICKLED FISH

SERVES 4-8

This is my version of escabèche where the fish fillets are fried, then marinated in a vinegary mixture.

1kg firm fish fillets such as sardines or pilchards or red gurnard
1 cup flour, seasoned with salt and freshly ground black pepper
extra virgin olive oil for frying
2 carrots, finely diced
2 sticks celery, finely diced
260g celeriac, finely diced
1 onion, finely diced
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
½ sprig thyme, leaves finely chopped and stalk discarded
2 bay leaves
380ml sherry vinegar
140ml olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
sugar to taste

Dredge the fish with the seasoned flour and lightly fry in extra virgin olive oil. Drain on paper towels then set aside to cool.

In a separate pan, sauté the carrot, celery, celeriac, onion, garlic, thyme and bay leaves until the vegetables are al dente, juicy and aromatic then add the vinegar, olive oil, a good pinch of salt, pepper and sugar to taste. Warm through then take off the heat. Allow the vegetable mix to cool slightly then pour it over the fish.

The fish is ready to eat now or can be stored in the fridge for up to 10 days. All you have to do is take it out of the marinade and serve with some crusty bread and salad for lunch or on toast for breakfast.



PICKLED FISH (top)
HOME-CURED BRESAOLA (above)



STEAMED SEAFOOD IN A BROTH WITH LAWAR

STEAMED SEAFOOD IN A BROTH WITH LAWAR

This is my "kind of, but not really" version of a traditional meal I ate in Bali. The dish revolves around the sambal. It is the common ingredient in the following recipes so please be sure to have a go at making your own – it is definitely better. That said, a store-bought version will simplify things and make this a very quick and easy meal for a group of people.

Sambal

100g shallots, sliced
10 cloves garlic, finely chopped
8cm knob ginger, finely chopped
6 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 coriander roots, crushed to a pulp in a mortar and pestle
6 bird's eye chillies, seeded and chopped
200g large red chillies, chopped
10 ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
2 bunches coriander (both leaves and stems), chopped
80g-120g palm sugar, grated
lime juice, salt and freshly ground black pepper all to taste

In a heavy-based saucepan, fry the shallots, garlic and ginger in a little vegetable oil until starting to soften then add the coriander root and chopped chillies, and cook for a further few minutes until aromatic.

When this mix is aromatic, add the tomatoes and cook until the mixture starts to thicken to a paste. This can take anywhere from 10-30 minutes, depending on the water content of the tomato. Throw in the coriander leaves and stems towards the end of cooking then add sugar, lime juice, salt and pepper to taste

Lawar

This recipe is not strictly lawar, but I firmly believe in taking a recipe and giving it your own twist. A traditional lawar is a leaf such as starfruit leaves or pepper leaf combined with fresh pig's blood, fresh coconut and spices. This lawar I've tailored for the broth by adding snake beans to give it a bit more substance.

500g snake beans (available from Asian stores; otherwise use green beans)
½ coconut, freshly grated (if not available, use 2 cups desiccated coconut)
juice of 1 lime for seasoning
mint leaves to serve
coriander leaves to serve
sambal to taste
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Blanch the beans and refresh in iced water then chop.

Toss all the ingredients in a bowl, with as much sambal, salt and pepper as you like.



Clockwise from top: Brie or Washed Rind Baked in Red Wine; Cheddar & Pickled Onions; Blue Cheese with Honey Olives & Truffle Oil

CHEESE

Sit back and enjoy the company and conversation while you savour delicious cheese. Often I don't serve anything with it other than bread or crackers, but here are some simple recipes to go with cheese. In the case of the brie, it can be a great way to serve it when it's unripe (though it doesn't have to be). I have not been specific with the type of cheese as I believe it should be bought with the same thoughtfulness as any fresh produce – that is, with consideration of what is ripe or good on the day.

BLUE CHEESE WITH HONEY OLIVES & TRUFFLE OIL

Simply take some Kalamata olives or other fleshy olive, coat with honey, place in a saucepan and heat gently until the honey just starts to simmer. Set aside and allow to cool before adding a touch of truffle oil. Serve with a good blue cheese.

CHEDDAR & PICKLED ONIONS

Bear in mind that the pickled onions take three weeks until ready.

330ml white wine vinegar
400ml dry white wine
500ml water
325ml extra virgin olive oil
80ml mustard seed oil (optional)
16 black peppercorns
8 cloves
8 allspice berries
pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
1 bunch thyme
12 bay leaves
good pinch of salt
2 good pinches of sugar
1kg pickling onions, peeled

Place all the ingredients except the onions in a saucepan over a high heat and bring to the boil. Continue to boil for 10 minutes – you should end up with 1¼ litres of liquid. Remove the pan from the heat and let the liquid cool completely.

Pack the onions into 4 sterilised 750ml jars or as many smaller jars as you need. Pour the liquid over the onions and put a little baking paper over the top to ensure they remain submerged. Seal the jars and allow to stand for 3 weeks before using. Serve with your favourite cheddar.

BRIE OR WASHED RIND BAKED IN RED WINE

1 whole round (about 250g) of your favourite washed-rind cheese or brie (you can use unripe brie)
½ bunch thyme, leaves only
pinch of freshly ground black pepper
1 cup red wine

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Place the cheese in a container just big enough to hold it then add the thyme leaves and pepper. Cover with the red wine and leave to stand for at least 2 hours but no longer than 4 hours.

Remove the cheese from the wine and place on a piece of baking paper on the plate or tray you want to serve the cheese on. Then place this in the oven for as long as it takes for the cheese to become warm and very soft and runny (4-6 minutes).

It's a fine line between deliciously gooey and a puddle on the plate so err on the side of caution. You can always put the cheese back in the oven if you need to cook it a little more – but it's not so easy to reform an overcooked cheese. Remove the paper and serve. Enjoy with crunchy bread.

For the seafood

The seafood you use is completely up to you and what's available in the markets. Always decide on the day and don't let a recipe dictate the seafood you buy. A recipe should only inspire you when you are buying delicious seafood and a recipe such as this one allows you to choose from a vast variety.

vegetable oil for frying
spoonful of sambal (1 tablespoon if you like it hot; 1 teaspoon if you don't)
2 kaffir lime leaves
squeeze of lemon juice
1cm piece galangal or ginger, crushed
6cm piece lemongrass, crushed
1 litre chicken or fish stock, or water
200g seafood per person (such as scrubbed mussels; leather jacket, left on the bone but skinned; green prawns; cuttlefish; clams; crab, cleaned and quartered; scallops)
fresh coriander leaves for serving

In a large saucepan with a steamer that fits over the top, or use a colander with a lid, heat a little oil over high heat and, when hot, fry the sambal. Add the kaffir lime, lemon, galangal, lemongrass and stock or water. When it has come to the boil, taste for the balance of flavour and add more sambal or lemon juice as necessary.

Place the seafood over the top in the steamer and reduce the heat so the broth can gently simmer and delicately steam the seafood with the aroma penetrating the fish and their juices falling into the broth.

To serve the whole meal, I like to present each person with a big bowl of seafood in some of the broth with the lawar on the side and a dish of the spicy sambal so everyone can adjust the heat of their dish as they like.

Credits: White plate (with the bresaola and pickled fish) and dessert bowl from Nest; cutlery from Ciroa; wooden tray from Country Road; dinner plates (for the steak), blue dipping bowl and small white bowl from Mud Australia; small bowl and cheese knife from Maxwell & Williams; white napkin from David Jones; small plate from Wheel and Barrow; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.

SLOW-COOKED PINEAPPLE WITH CREAM & BRANDY SNAPS

SERVES 4

These are typical brandy snaps, but I have left them flat rather than rolling into tubes to be filled.

Leave yourself enough time to prepare this dessert, as the pineapple takes two hours to cook.

¾ cup butter
1 cup sugar, plus extra for rolling
1 egg
¼ cup golden syrup
2 cups flour
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 pineapple
1 tablespoon finely diced ginger
2 cups apple juice
100g sugar
1 cup whipped cream

Preheat the oven to 175°C. In a medium bowl, beat together the butter and sugar until smooth, pale and creamy. Beat in the egg and golden syrup until well blended.

Combine the flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda and salt then stir into the golden syrup mixture to form a dough. Roll the dough into 2.5cm balls and roll the balls in the extra sugar. Place the balls about 5cm apart on an oven tray lined with baking paper.

Bake for 8-10 minutes. Allow the brandy snaps to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

Remove the leaves from the top of the pineapple, ensuring you don't cut into the fruit. Place the pineapple whole in an oven dish and bake at 180°C for 2 hours. You'll know it's done when it smells rich and fruity and when you touch it, it will feel just like a baked potato.

Place the ginger, apple juice and sugar in a saucepan, and simmer to reduce until syrupy (10-15 minutes).

When the pineapple is cooked, remove from the oven and reserve the juices in the pan. Skin the pineapple and cut into chunks. Serve drizzled with the syrup and reserved juices, whipped cream and brandy snaps.



course you can do it©

Jo Pearson prepares a simple yet impressive three-course dinner for six

shopping

GROCERIES
cream
egg pappardelle
extra virgin olive oil
mascarpone
parmesan
powdered gelatine
sour cream
vanilla beans

MEAT & SEAFOOD
large raw unpeeled prawns
smoked pork hock

FRESH PRODUCE
bay leaves
chives
fennel bulbs
fresh peas
fresh raspberries
lemons
mustard microgreens
onions
red radishes
watercress

ALCOHOL
dry sherry
white wine

STARTER

POACHED PRAWN, FENNEL & RADISH SALAD WITH LEMON CAPER VINAIGRETTE

18 large raw unpeeled prawns
zest and juice of 2 lemons
4 tablespoons capers, coarsely chopped
50ml extra virgin olive oil
6 tablespoons finely sliced chives
sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper
2 medium fennel bulbs, thinly sliced and fronds finely chopped
6 red radishes, thinly sliced
100g mustard microgreens

In a large saucepan, bring 1 litre of water to a steady simmer. Add the prawns and poach for 3-4 minutes or until pink and firm to the touch. Remove immediately from the saucepan and plunge into salted iced water. When the prawns have cooled, remove from the water and peel.

For the vinaigrette, whisk together the lemon zest and juice, capers, olive oil and chives. Season well with sea salt and black pepper.

Toss together the fennel, fennel fronds, radishes and rocket. Dress liberally with the vinaigrette. Divide the salad evenly on to 6 plates and top each with 3 prawns. Serve.

Wine Pinot Grigio.

MAIN

PAPPARDELLE WITH PULLED PORK, SPRING PEAS & WATERCRESS

1 large smoked pork hock
2 bay leaves
8 black peppercorns
1 onion, diced
1 teaspoon crushed garlic
1 tablespoon olive oil
200g young watercress
zest of 1 lemon
½ cup sour cream
salt and freshly ground black pepper
250g dried egg pappardelle (I used Rustichella)
500g fresh peas, shelled (or 200g frozen peas), blanched
shaved parmesan to serve

Place the pork hock, bay leaves and peppercorns in a saucepan, cover with water and simmer for around 2 hours until the meat falls from the bone. Remove the hock and set aside, and strain and reserve the cooking liquid. When cool, shred the pork, discarding the skin and bones.

Sauté the onion and garlic in the olive oil until transparent. Add the watercress, cook for 1 minute, then combine in a food processor with the lemon zest and sour cream. Blend together, slowly adding the reserved pork liquid until the purée reaches pouring consistency. Check the seasoning and set aside.

In a large saucepan of salted boiling water, cook the pasta until al dente (10-12 minutes). Drain, return to the saucepan and add the pork, peas and watercress sauce, toss over a low heat and serve topped with parmesan.

Wine Chardonnay.

DESSERT

VANILLA & MASCARPONE JELLY WITH FRESH RASPBERRIES

500ml cream
2 tablespoons sugar
2 vanilla beans, split lengthwise and seeds scraped
2 teaspoons powdered gelatine
2 tablespoons water
250g mascarpone
30ml limoncello (I use Lemon Z, or you can use good-quality vodka)
500g fresh raspberries

In a small saucepan, combine the cream, sugar and vanilla beans and seeds. Warm over a low heat to infuse for 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

In a double-boiler dissolve the gelatine in the water then whisk into the cream while both are still warm.

In a separate bowl, combine the mascarpone and limoncello. Slowly whisk in the room-temperature cream mixture. Pour into 6 moulds and refrigerate until set (around 4 hours).

To unmould the jellies, dunk in hot water to halfway up the sides then turn out. Serve with raspberries and a glass of limoncello on the side.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT

Credits: Cutlery from Antiques of Epsom; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.

tips

- Prawns can be substituted with similar crustaceans, such as crab or crayfish.
- The pork can be cooked well in advance.
- The main course can make a great accompaniment for seafood dishes – just remove the pork and substitute fish stock for the pork cooking liquid.
- The limoncello and raspberries in the dessert can be substituted with any fruit-based liqueur and seasonal fruit.



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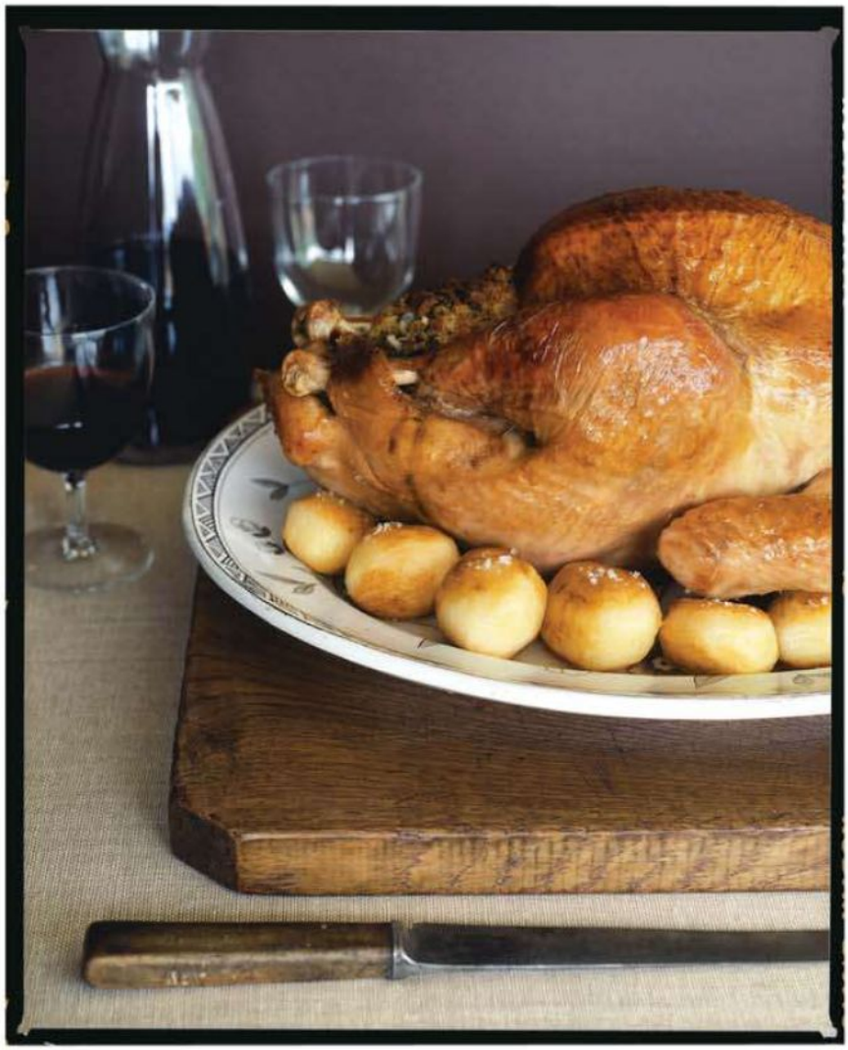


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turkey



The key to a succulent turkey is keeping the meat moist. There are many ways to achieve this: brining, basting, marinating, rubbing butter or pastes under the skin and turning the bird during cooking. I tend to use a combination of under-skin rubbing and turning because it's easy and, while the turkey doesn't look perfect, it produces lovely, moist meat. Brining and basting also work well but are more time-consuming. A 4kg turkey serves 8-10; 6kg serves 12-14.

MARINATING AND RUBBING

This helps keep the meat moist by adding extra fat under the skin. First, carefully slide your hands between the flesh and skin of the turkey breast and legs, trying not to tear the skin. You can slide in pieces of butter or make up an oil mixture as below, flavour it with herbs, then rub it all over the turkey under the skin. Best used in conjunction with turning or basting during cooking.

2-3 teaspoons flaky salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4-6 cloves garlic, chopped
finely grated zest of 2 lemons
6 tablespoons olive oil
finely chopped rosemary, thyme or sage leaves

BRINING

Brining hydrates the meat before cooking. It is perfect for free-range turkey, which has a tendency to dry out (more commercial birds usually have water and salt added). You will need a container large enough to hold the whole turkey covered with brine in the refrigerator. Brine for 18 hours for smaller birds and up to 24 hours for larger.

Basic brine is 1 cup of rock salt dissolved in 4 litres of hot water. You can, if you wish, add sugar, apple juice and onion-pickling spices for flavour.

Rinse the turkey thoroughly before stuffing to wash off excess salt, and keep in mind when making the stuffing and gravy that there will still be salt in the turkey and pan juices so season with care.

STUFFING

Turkey has two cavities for stuffing. The neck cavity is smallest and perfect for richer stuffing such as a pâté style, and the body is better for a bread type. The easiest stuffing has to be some torn-up good-quality bread seasoned with salt, pepper, herbs and olive oil. This soaks up the turkey juices giving a tasty result.

Before stuffing, rinse or wipe out the neck and body cavities very well and pat the whole bird dry. Don't overpack the stuffing as it will expand when cooking.

COOKING

Preheat the oven to 180°C and lower the temperature to 160°C after the first 30 minutes of cooking.

Roast a stuffed turkey for 35 minutes per kilogram plus another 30 minutes.

TURNING

Turning the bird during cooking helps keep the breast meat moist because as the juices start flowing they are absorbed back into the breast.

Start with the turkey lying on one side in a well-lined and greased baking dish (so the skin doesn't stick and remains intact). Cook for a quarter of the cooking time, turn to the other side and cook a further quarter, turn breast side down and cook a further quarter and finally turn breast side up, baste well with the pan juices and finish off the cooking.

BASTING

Basting helps keep plenty of fatty juice over the breast and leg meat and needs to be done about every 30 minutes. If you have used butter or oil under the skin you can baste with the pan juices. Or you might want to try brushing the turkey with plenty of cream; keep brushing over more every half-hour.

OTHER TIPS

- You can cover the turkey at any time with tinfoil to stop it browning and to help keep moisture in.
- Make a gravy or jus from the pan juices.
- Boil the neck and giblets to make stock to thin the gravy.

GEOFF LUNG / F8 PHOTO LIBRARY

ham

Most hams come precooked and can be eaten straight away (check the label), but a glazed ham looks gorgeous and has a lovely touch of extra flavour. And it is so delicious when it comes straight from the oven, warmed through and served as a centrepiece for dinner, or simply with mustard, chutneys and bread.

Glazing your own ham is easy just following a few simple steps. It will take about 30 minutes to glaze the ham or 2 hours to heat through a precooked whole ham (around 9kg) if you want to serve it warm.

You can buy hams with the bone in, which I prefer, or Champagne style – partially boned, but leaving the knuckle as a handle for carving. Or you can buy half hams.

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

With a sharp knife, cut through the skin around the bone about 6cm from the end. Do this in a pattern if you can, such as zigzag. Then carefully slice under the rind of the ham at the underside and carefully slide your fingers between the rind and fat layer. The rind will come away easily but can tear so work slowly, gently forcing your fingertips between the layers. You need to retain as much fat as possible for scoring. This can be done with a small knife, but may result in an uneven, cut-up surface.

Using a sharp knife, score the fat in diagonal lines 3cm apart and just down to the flesh. Repeat from the other side of the ham to create a diamond pattern. Place the ham in a large baking dish.

HEATING

If you want to serve your precooked ham warm, you need to keep it moist while heating by basting. It will take about 600ml of liquid such as beer (stout is great), orange or apple juice or cider. Reserve a little liquid to use in the glaze. Pour the rest over the ham. Place in the oven and bake for about 2 hours, basting every 20 minutes.

GLAZING

For a glaze you need to have a mixture that has the consistency of golden syrup. Sugar is important to give a caramelised finish and taste, so in theory you could just spread on honey or maple syrup, but it's best to cut the sweetness with other flavours.

I use a basic mixture of 1 cup brown sugar combined with enough liquid (beer, fruit juice, cider) to make a paste, then flavour it with grated ginger, orange zest, mustard or mustard powder and ground spices. You can also decorate the ham at this point. Traditional favourites are a whole clove in the centre of each scored diamond or thin slices of orange or pineapple.

Remove the ham from the oven (if you have been heating it) and carefully smear the scored fat all over with the glaze. Return to the oven and bake for a further 30 minutes or until golden, basting halfway through. Remove the ham from the oven and place on a ham stand on a platter.

CARVING

If you have a Champagne ham you can place it on a platter and carve from the base up.

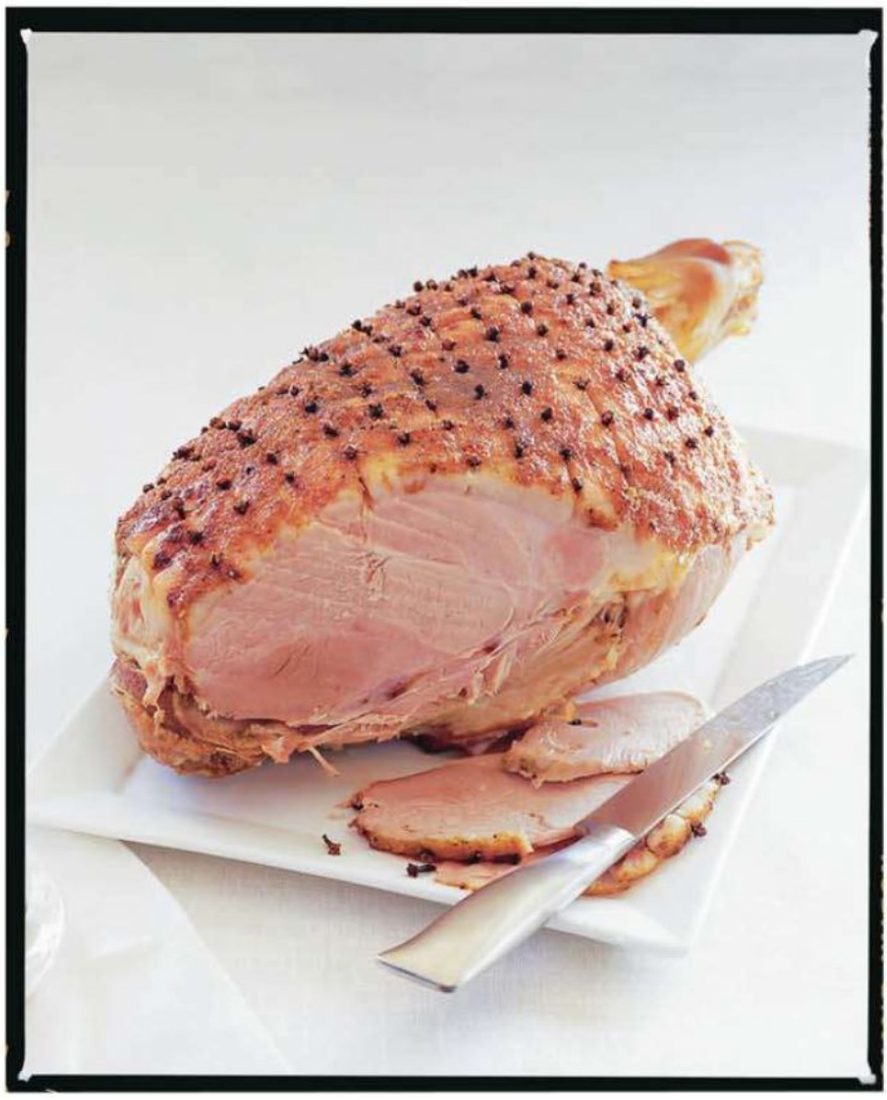
If you have a bone-in ham, cut a triangular wedge out of the top of the ham close to the knuckle and parallel to the platter. Remove the wedge from the ham and begin carving thin slices towards the bone, removing the slices as you go. As you work down the ham make sure you cut all the way around the bone, always slicing parallel to the plate.

STORING

The best way to store leftover ham is refrigerated in a ham bag or under a clean tea towel rinsed out every day or two in warm water and vinegar.

FIONA SMITH

Ham is so delicious when it comes straight from the oven, warmed through and served as a centrepiece for dinner



KIERAN SCOTT

Little Perlas

New-season potatoes are gems for simply boiling or using in salads and, packed ready-washed in 1.5kg boxes, they couldn't make life easier

PERLA, WILD ROCKET, FENNEL & ALMOND SALAD

Serves 4-6

A smart twist on traditional potato salad that goes well with fish, chicken or pork. Or to make a more substantial salad, toss through some hot-smoked salmon.

150g blanched almonds
1kg Perla potatoes
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel
1 teaspoon flaky sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons lemon juice
4 tablespoons lemon-infused or extra virgin olive oil
2 large fennel bulbs, with fronds
50g wild rocket
50g parmesan, shaved with a peeler

Preheat the oven to 150°C. Spread the almonds in an even layer on a baking tray. Bake for 15 minutes, stirring once, until just toasted. Set aside to cool.

In a saucepan, cover the Perlas with cold salted water. Bring slowly to the boil then gently simmer for 15-20 minutes until tender.

Meanwhile, place the lemon peel, salt and pepper in a large bowl and whisk in the lemon juice then gradually whisk in the oil.

When the Perlas are cooked, drain and cut into halves. Toss with the dressing and set aside to cool, stirring the potatoes through the dressing occasionally.

Remove the fronds from the fennel, chop and set aside. Slice the fennel as finely as possible (using a mandoline if you have one). Arrange in a serving bowl or on a plate with the cooled Perlas, wild rocket and roasted almonds. Drizzle with any dressing remaining in the bowl then sprinkle with the chopped fennel fronds and shaved parmesan.



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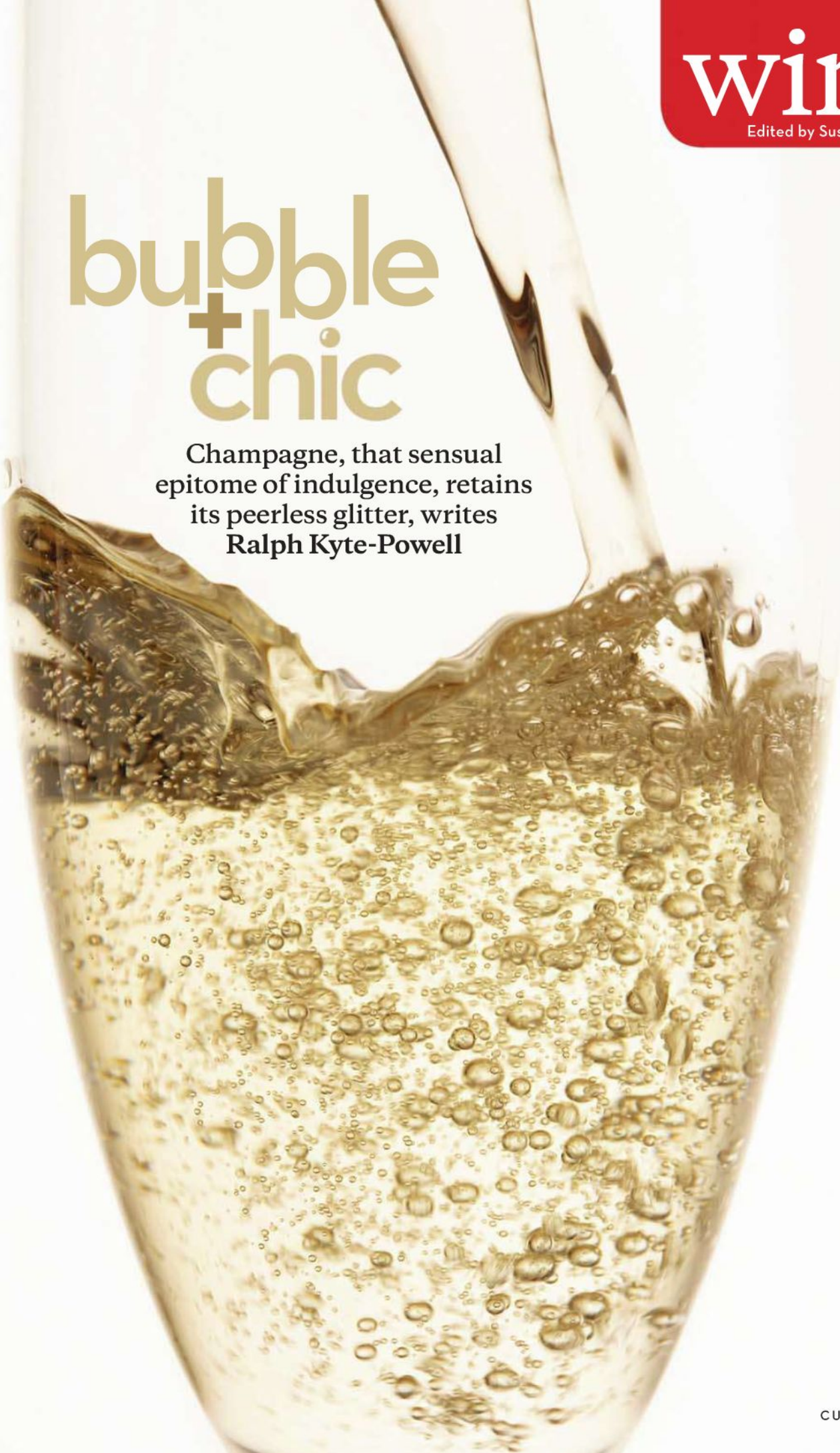
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CRAFTED NEW ZEALAND WINE



bubble + chic

Champagne, that sensual epitome of indulgence, retains its peerless glitter, writes **Ralph Kyte-Powell**



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CHAMPAGNE $100 & UNDER

When it comes to wines at the pinnacle of quality, Champagne excels. The top cuvées offer a sensual drinking experience with few peers and this tasting reinforced just how good some of these expensive prestige labels are. They are celebratory luxuries, of course, but like all great wines they are also meant to be savoured. It's amazing how many subtle complexities of aroma and flavour reveal themselves in the glass over time. Few of us are millionaires though, so these super-duper Champagnes remain extra-special occasion wines for all but the fortunate few.

The good news is that Champagnes further down the price ladder can offer a taste of the same sort of luxury on a more affordable scale. While Champagne is never really "cheap", it can over-deliver in value compared to many overly hyped French classics. Its price tag is usually much lower and quality more reliable than many a Bordeaux or Burgundy, for example.

To prove our point, only four of 41 Champagnes assessed by our panel did not earn a star rating and no fewer than 30 were awarded four stars and above. Again this year we divided the entrants into two price categories – $100 and under per bottle, and those over $100 – allowing us to evaluate the wines with a sharpened focus on value for money and relative quality.

AT THE READY Our wine reviews usually give an ageing forecast but Champagnes arrive on the market ready to drink. Cellaring recommendations are therefore not given for the Champagnes and sparkling wines reviewed in this issue. A few may surprise with longer bottle age, but most are released with enough age already, so drink up!



TASTING PANEL Wine panel chair John Belsham (far right), winemaker-owner of Foxes Island Wines in Marlborough, was joined by (from left) associate judge Jane Boyle, experienced Australian judge and writer Ralph Kyte-Powell and *Wine Orbit* author Sam Kim.

TOP 10

1. ★★★★★ VEUVE CLICQUOT PONSARDIN YELLOW LABEL BRUT NV $78-$85
2. ★★★★★ POMMERY SPRINGTIME BRUT ROSÉ NV $90-$100
3. ★★★★★ DELAMOTTE BRUT NV $69
4. ★★★★★ POL ROGER BRUT RÉSERVE NV $79.90-$90
5. ★★★★★ GH MUMM BRUT ROSÉ NV $93
6. ★★★★★ PERRIER-JOUËT GRAND BRUT NV $98
7. ★★★★★ LOUIS ROEDERER BRUT PREMIER NV $80-$100
8. ★★★★★ GOSSET BRUT EXCELLENCE NV $75
9. ★★★★★ AYALA BRUT NATURE ZÉRO DOSAGE NV $85-$95
10. ★★★★★ AYALA BRUT MAJEUR NV $75-$85

BEST BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ AYALA BRUT MAJEUR NV $75-$85

★★★★★ DELAMOTTE BRUT NV $69

★★★★★ GOSSET BRUT EXCELLENCE NV $75

★★★★★ VEUVE CLICQUOT PONSARDIN YELLOW LABEL BRUT NV $78-$85

★★★★½ PIPER-HEIDSIECK CUVÉE BRUT NV $69

★★★★ NICOLAS FEUILLATTE BRUT RÉSERVE PARTICULIÈRE NV $73-$75

TASTING RESULTS

5 STARS OUTSTANDING	18
4½ STARS EXCELLENT	3
4 STARS VERY GOOD	9
3 STARS GOOD	7
NO AWARD	4
TOTAL	**41**

1 TOP CHAMPAGNE

★★★★★ BEST BUY

VEUVE CLICQUOT PONSARDIN YELLOW LABEL BRUT NV $78-$85

Veuve Clicquot is one of the world's best-known Champagnes and its consistently high quality is a big reason why. This wine's generous, smooth style makes friends easily. Creamy vanilla bean, stone fruit, nutty and biscuity elements combine easily, and its luxurious lusciousness is framed beautifully in tangy acidity. It's the perfect party wine, and it won't blow the budget. It also very successfully reinforces the belief that Champagne works well with substantial food. And there's no hurry to drink it – a recent tasting of older Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label wines showed that a few years in the bottle will not weary it. [F]

TOP WINE PROFILE

WINNING PERSONALITY

The non-vintage Veuve Clicquot Champagne's generosity of style can give the illusion that it's a little sweeter than many of its competitors, but it's not.

At 10-11 grams per litre, the level of sweetening dosage added is actually a bit less than for some other Champagne houses. The real secret of that fleshy, ripe personality is found in the proportion of enriching Pinot Noir in the cuvée and the amount of older Reserve wine blended into it.

Pinot Noir accounts for 50-60 per cent of the wine, and the older Reserves, from a mixture of great and lesser vintages, make up 25-33 per cent of the blend. Far lower percentages are found in many competitors. Depth of flavour, complexity and fruit richness are thus enhanced.



2 ★★★★★ POMMERY SPRINGTIME BRUT ROSÉ NV $90-$100

The panel didn't recall tasting rosé Champagne from Pommery before, but this example confirms this old house's cred with the type. It's a pale, foaming wine with a delicate colour and a precise, elegant red-fruit palate of lovely depth and texture, finishing with an appetising crackle of acidity. [A]

3 ★★★★★ DELAMOTTE BRUT NV $69 BEST BUY

Good value from one of the less promoted labels of Champagne. Citrus, apple, honey and subtle biscuity threads mix it through a finely balanced, foaming, rich palate that finishes with good structure. It's a good all-rounder, ideally suited to a summer platter of antipasti. [B]

4 ★★★★★ POL ROGER BRUT RÉSERVE NV $79.90-$90

Seductive and complete, Pol Roger's white label non-vintage needs little introduction. It's a fleshy, forward style with poised appley fruit and bready richness in lovely harmony. It's a great seafood wine with a long, fragrant, yeasty finish that keeps you refilling your glass. [C]

5 ★★★★★ GH MUMM BRUT ROSÉ NV $93

New ownership has given the previously under-performing Mumm wines a real shot in the arm, and now they hold their own in illustrious company. This pink version is refined and delicate with raspberry, strawberry and gently floral aromas that lead through a dry, structured palate. Try it with good charcuterie. [H]

FOOD WITH CHAMPAGNE

The makers of Champagne would have us serving it with muesli for breakfast, such is their zeal in championing their wine as the perfect companion to, well, everything. A more detached perspective sees there are some foods that work perfectly with Champagne, and others that don't. But it is certainly a versatile friend – at a pinch you could drink it with canapés through to petits fours, something that may prove harder with Sauvignon Blanc or Syrah. So here are some great matches that give you a great excuse to pop another cork:

- sushi
- oysters
- smoked salmon blinis
- cheese gougères
- quail
- chicken liver mousse
- foie gras
- truffles
- lobster
- brioche with sautéed veal kidneys
- classy chicken sandwiches
- dim sum

BOTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CREAGHAN; PORTRAIT BY KEN DOWNIE



The good news is that Champagnes further down the price ladder can offer a more affordable taste of the same luxury

6 ★★★★★ **PERRIER-JOUËT GRAND BRUT NV $98**
Perrier-Jouët's non-vintage Grand Brut is always in perfect balance, reflecting the careful choices made in blending by Chef de Cave Hervé Deschamps. Citrus, biscuit and vanilla cream characters introduce a bright, fresh palate with a soft middle and brisk tang at the end. Serve with pre-dinner appetisers. [H]

7 ★★★★★ **LOUIS ROEDERER BRUT PREMIER NV $80-$100**
Always among the best non-vintage Champagnes, Roederer Brut Premier follows a house formula that values finesse highly. Delicacy and restraint, sherbetty freshness, floral, citrus and apple perfumes, and a thread of toasty complexity mark a vibrant wine that ticks all the boxes for a refined apéritif. [J]

8 ★★★★★ **GOSSET BRUT EXCELLENCE NV $75** BEST BUY
There's a slightly old-fashioned feel to the wines of this long-established Champagne house that suits traditional French cuisine. Brut Excellence is nutty and complex, combining toasty bottle-fermented characters with real fruit depth and a layered, rich palate. [D]

9 ★★★★★ **AYALA BRUT NATURE ZÉRO DOSAGE NV $85-$95**
Ayala's driest non-vintage Champagne actually has no added sweetness, hence the name Zéro Dosage. It depends on purity of fruit, with apple, citrus and bready characters woven together across a zesty palate that finishes super-crisp and appetising. Pair with fresh oysters. [G]

10 ★★★★★ **AYALA BRUT MAJEUR NV $75-$85** BEST BUY
Ayala's Champagnes are usually a little drier than most. This is a more commercial type than the bone-dry Zéro Dosage, smooth, rich and yeasty with a tight backbone that makes it a food-friendly style. [G]

★★★★★ **DUMANGIN PREMIER CRU ROSÉ NV $86-$98**
A very pale rosé from highly rated vineyards, Dumangin has aromas of raspberry, caramel and florals and a bready yeast autolysis character. It has tons of flavour but still retains delicacy. The texture and flow is table-wine-like, rather than the foam and zest of most Champagnes. A wine for food. [E]

★★★★★ **GH MUMM CORDON ROUGE NV $85**
Mumm Cordon Rouge is vastly improved these days. It's a pity so much of it is sprayed from the winner's podium at Formula One motor races! Eggy Chardonnay traits, citrus, spice and biscuity notes run through a steely palate that is very moreish and long. Serve it with chicken sandwiches at the races. [H]

AUTOLYSIS

In discussions on the finer points of any high-quality sparkling wine, the term "yeast autolysis" or just "autolysis" is often used. Autolysis describes the influence in aroma and flavour of the lees of dead yeast cells that form during the bottle fermentation process. The lees are removed when the wine is disgorged before sale.

Autolysis is favoured because it imparts bready, biscuity or cracked yeast characters to the wine that it has been in contact with, usually showing as a subtle yeastiness in young Champagnes, then increasing to a distinct biscuity quality after a few years.

After another three or four more years in the bottle it tends to become more like crusty bread. These flavours make a delicious addition to the aromatic and taste profiles of the great sparkling wines.



4½

★★★★½ **NICOLAS FEUILLATTE BRUT ROSÉ NV $100**

A great Champagne to serve with good charcuterie, this rosé has a pale, slightly coppery colour and a delicately fruity, clean and inviting bouquet. Reminiscent of framboise eau-de-vie and perhaps cassis, it has a lingering, ultra-fine palate full of ripe-fruit flavours. [D]

★★★★½ **PIPER-HEIDSIECK CUVÉE BRUT NV $69**

BEST BUY

The bright red label of Piper gives it instant recognition, and the wine inside is one of the most reliable and best-value Champagnes around. Apple, citrus, custard and yeasty aromas are woven seamlessly together. A good all-rounder at a fair price. [C]

4

★★★★ **AYALA BRUT ROSÉ MAJEUR NV $90-$99**

A nose of red fruits, lanolin and a touch of nutty aldehyde introduces this dry, salmon-coloured Champagne. Its high-toned edge and good extract of yeasty autolysis make it a wine with plenty of personality, a bit out of the squeaky-clean mainstream. Serve it in the right spirit of adventure with dim sum. [G]

★★★★ **CHARLES HEIDSIECK BRUT RÉSERVE NV $99**

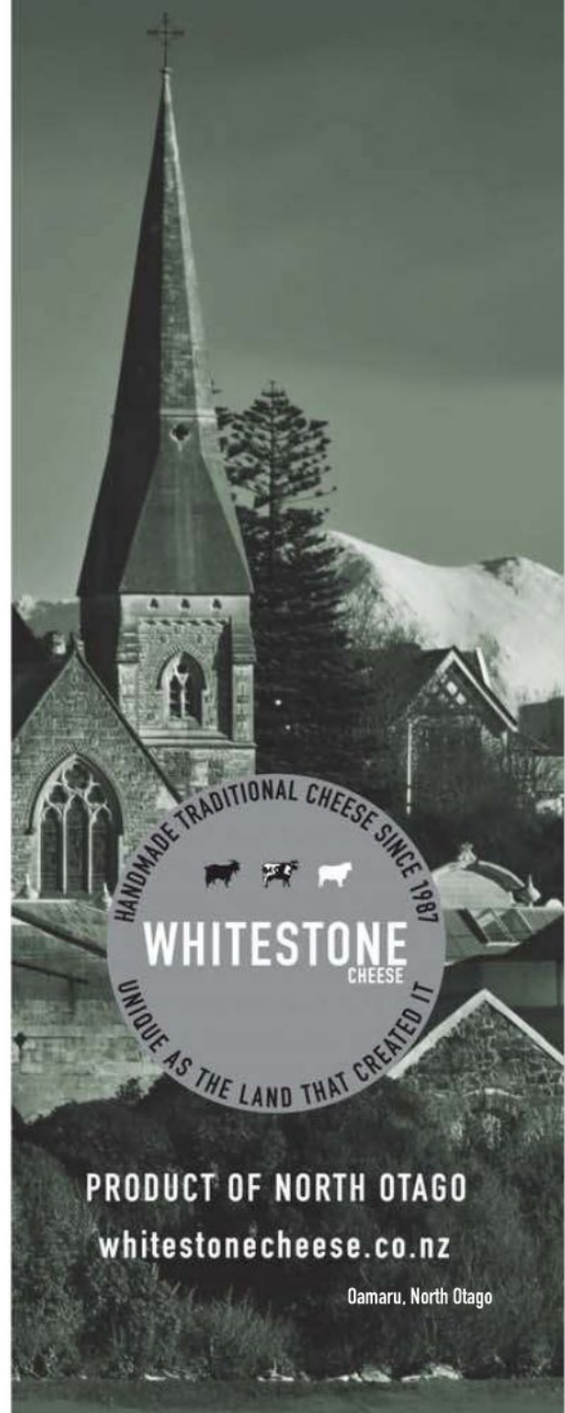
This is a generously built Champagne in typical Charles Heidsieck style. Creamy yeast autolysis is well integrated, and the apple and citrus fruit fresh and lively. It's rounded and long in flavour, and finishes with a grippy bite to the palate. [C]

HOUSE SPECIALITIES Non-vintage Champagne is often spoken of in terms of "house style", the signature that makes, say, Bollinger different from Perrier-Jouët. Styles can range from big and butch to quite delicate. House style relies on a complex mélange of vineyard sites, grape varieties, winemaking technique, sweetness level, age of the blend and above all, consistency.

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champagne



Champagne is often cheaper and quality more reliable than many a famed Bordeaux

★★★★ **DUVAL-LEROY FLEUR DE CHAMPAGNE NV $80-$83**
This wine has nutty and vanilla bean flavours and a creamy-rich middle. The finish is firm and it would be better served with food rather than on its own. Try it with vegetable hors d'oeuvres. [D]

★★★★ **HENRIOT SOUVERAIN BRUT NV $85-$99**
Henriot isn't the best-known Champagne, but quality is excellent. Lemon, white peach and crusty bread aromas, lovely richness and balance – a feeling of completeness makes it very welcoming. Its finesse and intensity recommend it as an appetiser to a luxurious meal. [I]

★★★★ **MOËT & CHANDON BRUT IMPÉRIAL NV $75-$80**
Our example of Moët's big-selling non-vintage Champagne seemed to lack a little of its usual freshness, but it was still very good. Marmite-like yeastiness gives it richness and nutty complexity backs things up well. Fruit is subdued and it has good intensity of sustained flavour. [F]

★★★★ **NICOLAS FEUILLATTE BRUT RÉSERVE PARTICULIÈRE NV $73-$75** BEST BUY
A refined, subtle non-vintage Champagne. It's perfumed with apple, citrus, herb and biscuity notes on the nose, and creamy, fine mouthfeel. A seductive lemon meringue-like flavour runs through the nicely balanced palate. A fine match for simple fish dishes. [D]

★★★★ **PIPER-HEIDSIECK ROSÉ SAUVAGE NV $95**
A generous, fruit-forward pink Champagne, Piper Rosé Sauvage has deep colour and a fresh, attractive nose reminiscent of wild strawberries. The nutty, brioche-like flavours are very appealing and it finishes firm and very dry. Try it with salmon. [C]

★★★★ **POMMERY ROYAL BRUT NV $75-$85**
Notes of green herbs and citrus initially suggest this Champagne has an austere personality, but a bready note adds richer interest. It's an uncomplicated drop at the more savoury end of the Champagne range. A very good wine but perhaps lacking a little zip. A fresher example may be different. [A]

★★★★ **RUINART BLANC DE BLANCS NV $95-$99**
A broader, richer Blanc de Blancs than most, this has plenty of overt yeasty character and a soft, easy middle palate. There's plenty of generous flavour and tons of personality, so if you like the full, round style, go for it. It doesn't have the delicacy or finesse of many other wines in this tasting, but this in-your-face style has its appeal. [F]

CHAMPAGNE
OVER $100



TOP 5

1. ★★★★★ TAITTINGER COMTES DE CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE BLANCS 1999 $427-$459
2. ★★★★★ PERRIER-JOUËT CUVÉE BELLE ÉPOQUE 2002 $228
3. ★★★★★ TAITTINGER LES FOLIES DE LA MARQUETTERIE NV $124-$134
4. ★★★★★ GH MUMM DE CRAMANT NV $189
5. ★★★★½ TAITTINGER BRUT RÉSERVE NV $102-$110



1 TOP CHAMPAGNE

★★★★★

TAITTINGER COMTES DE CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE BLANCS 1999 $427-$459

Simply delicious, this Chardonnay-based wine may be the best of all the Blanc de Blancs. It's a beautifully creamy, foaming drop with a supremely appetising bouquet of citrus, vanilla cream, panettone, stone fruits and honey, and a superbly fine, yet lush, palate of great length and presence with a lingering yeasty aftertaste. A treat with food of similar smoothness and richness, perhaps foie gras, a chicken liver parfait or a buttery fish dish. [K]



TOP WINE PROFILE

COUNT ON THIS

Most of the great Champagne houses make their prestige cuvée from a blend of the grapes of Champagne, the red Pinot Noir and the white Chardonnay, with Pinot Meunier of less importance. Taittinger differs from most.

When the house launched its flagship label with the 1952 vintage, it was made solely from the best Chardonnay available. In so doing, it honoured the memory of the last Count (comte) of Champagne, Thibaud IV, a Crusader who supposedly brought the Chardonnay vine to the Champagne region.

The wine is always famous for its finesse, and it's surprisingly ageworthy, usually improving for at least three or four years after release. Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs enjoyed such appeal among connoisseurs that a rosé, made predominantly from Pinot Noir, joined the range with the 1966 vintage.

The outstanding quality of the Taittinger entries saw three placed in the Top 5.



2 ★★★★★ PERRIER-JOUËT CUVÉE BELLE ÉPOQUE 2002 $228

Belle Époque's floral bottle is easily Champagne's most distinctive, a wonderful essay in art nouveau glass by 19th-century glassmaker Émile Gallé. It's a supremely delicate wine. If you like top-end Champagne for its power, look elsewhere. Reminiscent of white peach, citrus and biscuit, with a steely, tight backbone, it's a great companion for briny, fresh oysters. [H]

3 ★★★★★ TAITTINGER LES FOLIES DE LA MARQUETTERIE NV $124-$134

A single-vineyard Champagne from a prized plot of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir right next door to Taittinger's famous Château de la Marquetterie near Épernay. It's a delicate, soft wine, exemplifying the smooth Taittinger style with its lovely balance of toasty richness, complexity and liveliness. [K]

Only four of the 41 Champagnes assessed by the panel failed to attain a star rating

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champagne



Champagne is certainly a versatile friend – at a pinch you could happily drink it with canapés through to petits fours

4 ★★★★★ **GH MUMM DE CRAMANT NV $189**

Mumm's de Cramant Blanc de Blancs is gorgeous and creamy, in the style of Taittinger's Comtes de Champagne – the epitome of the all-Chardonnay Champagne. It's soft and gently sensual with delicious brioche, apple and citrus notes, silky mouthfeel and zesty acidity. A celebratory apéritif par excellence. [H]

5 ★★★★★ **TAITTINGER BRUT RÉSERVE NV $102-$110**

The Taittinger house makes Champagne of mellow smoothness, exemplified by this non-vintage blend. A perfect partner for cheesy appetisers, it offers citrus, pastry cream and toasty complexity and an easy, flowing palate with a zippy, fresh finish. Very easy to like. [K]

★★★★★ **CHAMPAGNE DOM PÉRIGNON 2000 $249-$279**

Dom Pérignon, of course, needs little introduction. The original and best known of the prestige cuvées, it's synonymous with the high life. Match it appropriately with smoked salmon and caviar. It's not purely hype though – the wine within the distinctive old-fashioned bottle is utterly beguiling. It's a superb creaming style with finely counterpointed fruit and biscuity complexity in perfect harmony. [F]

4½

★★★★½ **BOLLINGER ROSÉ NV $145-$155**

Recent shipments of Bollinger have showed more verve and freshness than those of a decade ago. This pink version walks a fascinating path between the nutty, yeasty complexity of the traditional house style and the fresh strawberry, citrus and spicy qualities of modern fashion. The result is a full-bodied rosé of impressive depth and persistence. [G] ✪

For complete wine-tasting listings visit **cuisine.co.nz** (three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed, contact the distributor, listed by letter:
[A] Epicurean Wines, ph: 09-638 5000 **[B]** Glengarry, ph: 0800-733 505 **[C]** Hancocks, ph: 09-361 8400 **[D]** Lion Nathan, ph: 0800-107 272 **[E]** Macvine International, ph: 09-579 7451 **[F]** Moët Hennessy, ph: 09-308 2065 **[G]** Negociants NZ, ph: 09-531 5222 **[H]** Pernod Ricard NZ, ph: 09-336 8300 **[I]** red+white cellar, ph: 0800-946 379 **[J]** EuroVintage, ph: 09-480 0789 **[K]** Vintners NZ, ph: 09-621 0210



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Splendid sparklers

New Zealand leads the world in affordable, classy sparklers, writes **Ralph Kyte-Powell**

What did the *Cuisine* panel learn from this tasting of sparkling wine? Many things. Like what amazing value some of New Zealand's top sparklers are. Like how many different types of sparkling wine consumers are offered these days: juicy-sweet moscato, méthode traditionnelle bubblies of freshness and refinement, fizz from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, fizz from Prosecco or Chenin Blanc or Parellada. And not least, the panel were amazed by what good value can be had with some of these sparklers from countries as diverse as Australia, France, Italy, Spain and New Zealand.

Across this broad sweep of sparkling wines, one thing stood out – the quality of the New Zealanders. Of 26 wines that scored four stars and above, 15 were Kiwis. Reinforcing the result even further, six of the seven five-star wines were made in New Zealand.

The good news for the consumer didn't stop there either. Value among the award-winners was excellent. Two of the Top 5 sell for $20 or less. These, and several other top-quality sub-$20 wines confirm that you don't need to be a tycoon to enjoy a really good glass of bubbles. Good news indeed.

TOP 5

1. ★★★★★ LINDAUER ROSÉ NV $16
2. ★★★★★ BROWN BROTHERS PATRICIA PINOT NOIR & CHARDONNAY BRUT 2005 $40
3. ★★★★★ HUNTER'S MIRU MIRU NV $25-$27
4. ★★★★★ NAUTILUS CUVÉE MARLBOROUGH BRUT NV $38-$40
5. ★★★★★ LINDAUER SPECIAL RESERVE BRUT CUVÉE NV $20

BEST BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ LINDAUER ROSÉ NV $16

★★★★★ LINDAUER SPECIAL RESERVE BRUT CUVÉE NV $20

★★★★ BROWN BROTHERS ZIBIBBO NV $17

★★★★ JACOB'S CREEK MOSCATO ROSÉ NV $14

★★★★ PERELADA CAVA BRUT RESERVA NV $16.90

TASTING RESULTS

5 STARS OUTSTANDING	7
4½ STARS EXCELLENT	4
4 STARS VERY GOOD	15
3 STARS GOOD	25
NO AWARD	41
TOTAL	**92**

TASTING PANEL

The Champagne panel of chair John Belsham, winemaker-owner of Foxes Island Wines, *Cuisine*'s experienced Australian judge and writer Ralph Kyte-Powell, *Wine Orbit* author Sam Kim and associate judge Jane Boyle, also did duty for the sparkling tasting.

1 TOP SPARKLING



★★★★★ BEST BUY

LINDAUER ROSÉ NV
$16 (NZ)

This non-vintage sparkling rosé is a triumph for Lindauer. Just how they got such quality in the bottle for $16 mystified our panellists, and should have consumers jumping for joy. Inviting pink colour pleases the eye, and the aromas of spring blossom, strawberries and vanilla toffee are deliciously seductive. It has an ultra-fine, foaming effervescence and the intensely flavoured, sustained palate combines softness with zest in perfect equilibrium. A beautifully made sparkling wine and an absolute bargain. Serve it with special party food and good friends. [E]

TOP WINE PROFILE

LINDAUER'S LEGACY

Honouring the Lindauer Cellars in Gisborne, the sparkling wine range from the Montana empire (now renamed Brancott Estate) was launched as Lindauer in 1981.

It broke new ground in New Zealand by offering true bottle-fermented sparkling wines at an affordable price.

Chardonnay and Pinot Noir predominate across the range, with a whisper of Pinotage in the rosé. Grapes come from Gisborne and Hawke's Bay. The wines have always offered great value, a compelling reason for their popularity.

In fact the consistently good Lindauer is New Zealanders' favourite sparkling wine. It also enjoys some success on export markets.

Our tasting panel confirmed the range's quality credentials via two five-star ratings, each for a wine selling for $20 or under.



Six of the seven five-star sparkling wines were made in New Zealand

5

2 ★★★★★ BROWN BROTHERS PATRICIA PINOT NOIR & CHARDONNAY BRUT 2005 $40 (KING VALLEY, VICTORIA)
Many years ago, Brown Brothers started developing vineyards in the alpine foothills of Victoria's north-east to be a source of fruit for top-notch sparkling wine. The results now place them in the ranks of Australia's best fizz makers. A citrus tang, hints of vanilla caramel and nutty aldehyde provide beautifully refined characters to an emphatically built wine of superb mouthfeel and outstanding persistence. [A]

3 ★★★★★ HUNTER'S MIRU MIRU NV $25-$27 (MARLBOROUGH, NZ)
Miru Miru is Maori for "bubbles" – a very appropriate name for this very fine Kiwi sparkler. Rich and complex, the toasty, nutty nose introduces a full-throttle sparkling wine of real weight and power. The palate has great length and a vibrant, clean finish. A broader bubbly for those who enjoy a big mouthful. Try it with seafood spring rolls.

4 ★★★★★ NAUTILUS CUVÉE MARLBOROUGH BRUT NV $38-$40 (NZ)
A high-quality New Zealand méthode traditionnelle, Nautilus is an elegant combination of subtlety and refinement. Ideal with delicate seafoods, it offers restrained yeasty, nutty dimensions to savoury lanolin and richer mealy qualities. It's well made and very tasty with a crisp, appley finish and brisk, tangy acidity.

5 ★★★★★ LINDAUER SPECIAL RESERVE BRUT CUVÉE NV $20 (NZ) BEST BUY
A step up the Lindauer product ladder from our top wine, this Reserve is another triumph for this division of Brancott Estate. Coppery pink, smooth, long-flavoured and tangy, it has a creamy palate with a generous measure of yeast autolysis, good structure and flesh. Try it with salmon. [E]

★★★★★ ALLAN SCOTT MARLBOROUGH BLANC DE BLANCS NV $27-$32 (NZ)
This very fine drop reinforces the suitability of Marlborough Chardonnay for top-class sparkling wine. It's a subtly complex wine smelling of crisp linen, biscuit and brioche, apple and citrus. It has perfect poise and palate balance, with careful, light liqueuring bringing out the best in that essency fruit. Silky and aristocratic, it's one of New Zealand's best blanc de blancs.

★★★★★ CUVÉE VIRGINIE 2006 $54-$58 (MARLBOROUGH, NZ)
One of New Zealand's most highly regarded méthodes traditionnelles, this delicate apéritif style from No 1 Family Estate is named after Virginie Le Brun, the daughter of owners Daniel and Adele Le Brun (see page 37). The wine has custardy Chardonnay and citrus aromas with a dab of regional gooseberry adding savoury freshness. It's smooth and seamless in the mouth with an outstanding balance of dosage and zippy acidity.

SPARKLING FORM

Champagne's bubbles and much of its aroma and flavour come via an expensive, slow, labour-intensive method of bottle fermentation. The result is super-fine, creamy textured and complex in flavour.

A generation ago, sparkling makers in New World countries like New Zealand and Australia often employed cheaper methods like tank fermentation, even carbonation, which gave big bubbles, poor texture and little flavour. Now, thanks to evolving know-how and mechanisation, the traditional Champagne method is common down under. Wines made this way in New Zealand are labelled méthode traditionnelle and, as the *Cuisine* judging panel discovered, their general quality is excellent.

BOTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CREAGHAN



SAUVIGNON SURPRISE

New Zealand's best-known wine across the world is Sauvignon Blanc. Its success over the past 25 years has led to more and more vineyards being planted and vast quantities of Sauvignon wine being made.

So much so that we are seeing good quality examples for ridiculously low prices. Have New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc growers, especially speculative investors, killed the goose that laid the golden egg?

Maybe, but at times like these, when a glut is a reality, those who think outside the square are to be commended.

In this tasting we saw the arrival of sparkling Sauvignon Blancs. A couple were quite outstanding, capturing its essence and enhancing it with a refreshing foam of creaming bubbles. These wines could add a new dimension to your wine diet over the summer months.

Try both our award-winners – Waipara Hills Marlborough Cuvée NV and Kiki Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc 2009 – to see how good they can be.



★★★★½ **BOULDEVINES ÉTINCELLE NV $29.95 (MARLBOROUGH, NZ)**
A blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier from mature Marlborough vines, this cuvée has a touch of colour, but it's not quite pink. The biscuity, creamy, oatmealy complexities enhance stone fruit and strawberry characters, and it has outstanding balance and finesse.

★★★★½ **JANSZ OF TASMANIA BRUT CUVÉE NV $20-$30**
Another charming Tasmanian sparkling wine, reinforcing Australia's island state's reputation for top fizz. With a restrained, appley nose, it's clean and appetising. While it's not an overt type of wine, it has great presence and deliciously long flavour, finishing fragrant and quietly complex. Try it with the freshest of shellfish. [D]

★★★★½ **WAIPARA HILLS MARLBOROUGH CUVÉE NV $16-$21.90 (NZ)**
Very fruity and inviting, this direct, uncomplicated sparkling wine has attractive passionfruit and herbal Sauvignon Blanc fruit at its heart. That purity and intensity of tropical fruit, and its refreshing, crisp nature, are sure to find favour with those seeking a really different sparkling wine.

★★★★½ **YELLOWGLEN VINTAGE PERLE 2006 $24-$30 (VARIOUS REGIONS, VICTORIA)**
Perle is a name traditionally associated with cheaper German sparkling wines, but this beautifully made Australian wine is a lot better than that. Rich, buttery notes, candied fruits and creamy complexity give it a truly classical style, and the silky palate has lip-smacking freshness, intensity and a perfectly measured, fine, tapering finish. This is good stuff! [G]



★★★★ **BROWN BROTHERS ZIBIBBO NV $17 (NORTHERN VICTORIA)**
BEST BUY
There's a lot of Muscat grown in Australia and it comes in many guises. The grapey, Italian-inspired, low-alcohol sparkling wines are a big hit. Sweet, honeyed and floral, this fresh, luscious take on the style has a zesty acid counterpoint and flavour intensity. A summery refresher with a soft, spritzy foam, ideal with fruit desserts. [A]

★★★★ **DEUTZ MARLBOROUGH CUVÉE NV $35 (NZ)**
Deutz is among the most successful New World subsidiaries of the French Champagne houses. This elegant non-vintage wine opens with citrus, green apple and toasty notes with a whisper of sulphide complexity. There's lovely peachy richness in the mouth, making it very appealing and easy to drink. [E]

★★★★ **DEUTZ MARLBOROUGH PRESTIGE CUVÉE 2005 $40 (NZ)**
Steely with a slight sulphide touch that caused some discussion, this vintage wine from Marlborough has toasty, red-berry fruit on the nose, a smooth middle palate and a very complex personality. The finish is rather abrupt for a wine of this pedigree, but overall it's a great effort, worthy of an elaborate poultry dish. [E]

★★★★ **DIBON CAVA BRUT RESERVE NV $22-$25 (CATALONIA, SPAIN)**
A grapey, smooth cava from Spain's Catalonian hinterland. Citrus aromas and the savoury tang of a touch of pepper make an inviting introduction. The palate is long and crisp, with a smooth middle and good balance. It's a cleaner, fresher cava than some, a good companion to panfried fish. [H]



With several excellent wines at $20 and under, including two in the Top 5, it's obvious that you don't need to be a tycoon to enjoy a really good glass of bubbles

★★★★ **DOMAINE STE MICHELLE BLANC DE BLANCS NV $24-$28 (WASHINGTON, US)**
It's not often we try sparkling wines from the north-western corner of the US, but this Chardonnay bubbly is a good advertisement for the type. Crab dishes would suit it well. It's a sparkling wine with substance; well-defined, tangy Chardonnay fruit is at the core, there's good yeast integration and the texture is creamy, clean and elegant. [I]

★★★★ **FOUR SISTERS PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY NV $18-$20 (VICTORIA)**
Four Sisters is one of those satisfying, easy-to-like sparklers that the Australians do so well. It might not scale the highest peaks, but it does its refreshing job well. Sweet spice, apple-custard and pastry notes lead through a generously built wine of good texture and structure, finishing with pleasant, soft acidity. [F]

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★★★★ **GUSTAVE LORENTZ CRÉMANT D'ALSACE BRUT ROSÉ NV $32-$38 (ALSACE, FRANCE)**
Sparkling wines from Alsace, on France's German frontier, are little known down under, but their quality makes them worth a try. This blushing pink version smells of strawberries and cream, cherries and spice. One panellist described it as "pretty", which sums it up nicely. The palate is fruit-driven with medium concentration, lacy bubbles and a fine, persistent finish. [C]

★★★★ **HUNTER'S RESERVE MIRU MIRU 2006 $32-$35 (MARLBOROUGH, NZ)**
A forward, quite developed type of sparkling wine, Miru Miru Vintage 2006 isn't quite as fresh as the non-vintage wine that was one of the favourites of the tasting. It's not bad though, with aged butter caramel aromas of complexity, and a full-on, expansive personality that's hard to ignore. It has lush mouthfeel and good acid structure. Not the finest wine here, but one of the most flavoursome. Good with roast chicken.

★★★★ **JACOB'S CREEK MOSCATO ROSÉ NV $14 (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)** BEST BUY
Many Australian wineries do moscato these days. Most are pretty good. This pretty, pale-pink drop has a succulent aroma that's sweet but delicate. Floral, raspberry and crushed grape characters give it a lovely juicy quaffability, and a touch of firmness at the end gives it focus. Great with fresh fruits. [E]

★★★★ **JANSZ OF TASMANIA ROSÉ NV $20-$30**
This NV rosé has the typical purity and zip that makes Tassie fizz so appealing. It's pale in colour, with citrus, redcurrant and vanilla cream aromas, a fragrant, dry, foaming palate and a zing of clean acidity underneath. An apéritif style, perhaps with some cured Tasmanian salmon. [D]

★★★★ **KIKI SPARKLING SAUVIGNON BLANC 2009 $21.95 (MARLBOROUGH, NZ)**
Sparkling wine is a great way to move our lake of Sauvignon Blanc, and this one ain't half-bad either. It has a persistent bubble and excellent purity of varietal aroma and flavour. Passionfruit, floral talc and leafy aromas kick things off and a suggestion of sweetness aids its eminent drinkability. It tastes fruity, zesty and fun.

★★★★ **MARGRAIN LA MICHELLE 2007 $38 (MARTINBOROUGH, NZ)**
Vibrant, spicy/nutty apple and peach aromas reflect the quality of this sparkling wine from Martinborough. It has good weight and balancing acidity. The complex biscuity subtlety and core of citrus and apple is supported by firm, dry extract. A great effort.

★★★★ **NO 1 ROSÉ NV $44-$48 (MARLBOROUGH, NZ)**
This pale, coppery-pink Pinot Noir rosé is a perfect companion to pâté-topped canapés. With strawberry and vanilla ice-cream aromas, it's juicy and crisp in the mouth with a lip-smacking clean finish.

★★★★ **PALLISER ESTATE MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE 2006 $34 (MARTINBOROUGH, NZ)**
Lightly creamy and texturally pleasing, this méthode traditionnelle has plenty of personality, although some green threads may not please those who like a rich, ripe style. Its delicate citrus and chalky qualities are the stuff of a good apéritif.

★★★★ **PERELADA CAVA BRUT RESERVA NV $16.90 (CATALONIA)** BEST BUY
Cava is Spain's premier sparkling wine and this is a typical example at a good price. It has earthy, stone fruit, pepper and lanolin aromas, followed by a savoury, easy palate of attractive softness and length. Try it with tapas. [B] ✪

> One thing stood out – the quality of the New Zealanders. Of 26 wines that scored four stars and above, 15 were Kiwis

For complete wine-tasting listings visit **cuisine.co.nz** (three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed, contact the distributor (listed by letter):
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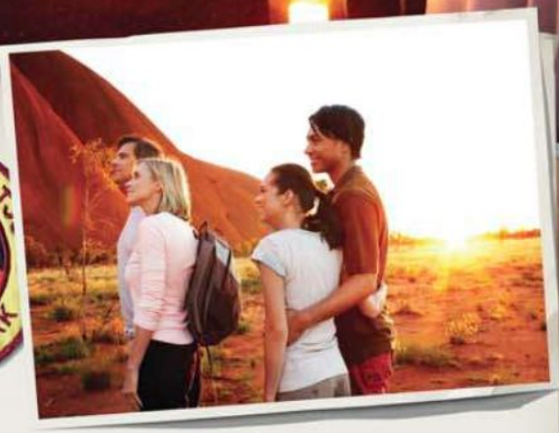
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TOP 10

1. ★★★★★ SOHO McQUEEN CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2009 $40
2. ★★★★★ GIBBSTON VALLEY CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2009 $42-$45
3. ★★★★★ SPY VALLEY PINOT NOIR 2009 $28.95
4. ★★★★★ SOHO McQUEEN COUTURE PINOT NOIR 2008 $50
5. ★★★★★ AKARUA PINOT NOIR 2009 $38-$40
6. ★★★★★ WHITEHAVEN MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2008 $26-$30
7. ★★★★★ FRAMINGHAM PINOT NOIR 2009 $34.95
8. ★★★★★ WAITIRI CREEK PINOT NOIR 2008 $40-$50
9. ★★★★★ DESERT HEART MACKENZIES RUN PINOT NOIR 2008 $36-$45
10. ★★★★★ MARTINBOROUGH VINEYARD TE TERA PINOT NOIR 2009 $29-$32

BEST BUYS

Best Buys offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ GOLDWATER MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2008 $22-$28

★★★★★ MARTINBOROUGH VINEYARD TE TERA PINOT NOIR 2009 $29-$32

★★★★★ SPY VALLEY PINOT NOIR 2009 $28.95

★★★★★ WHITEHAVEN MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2008 $26-$30

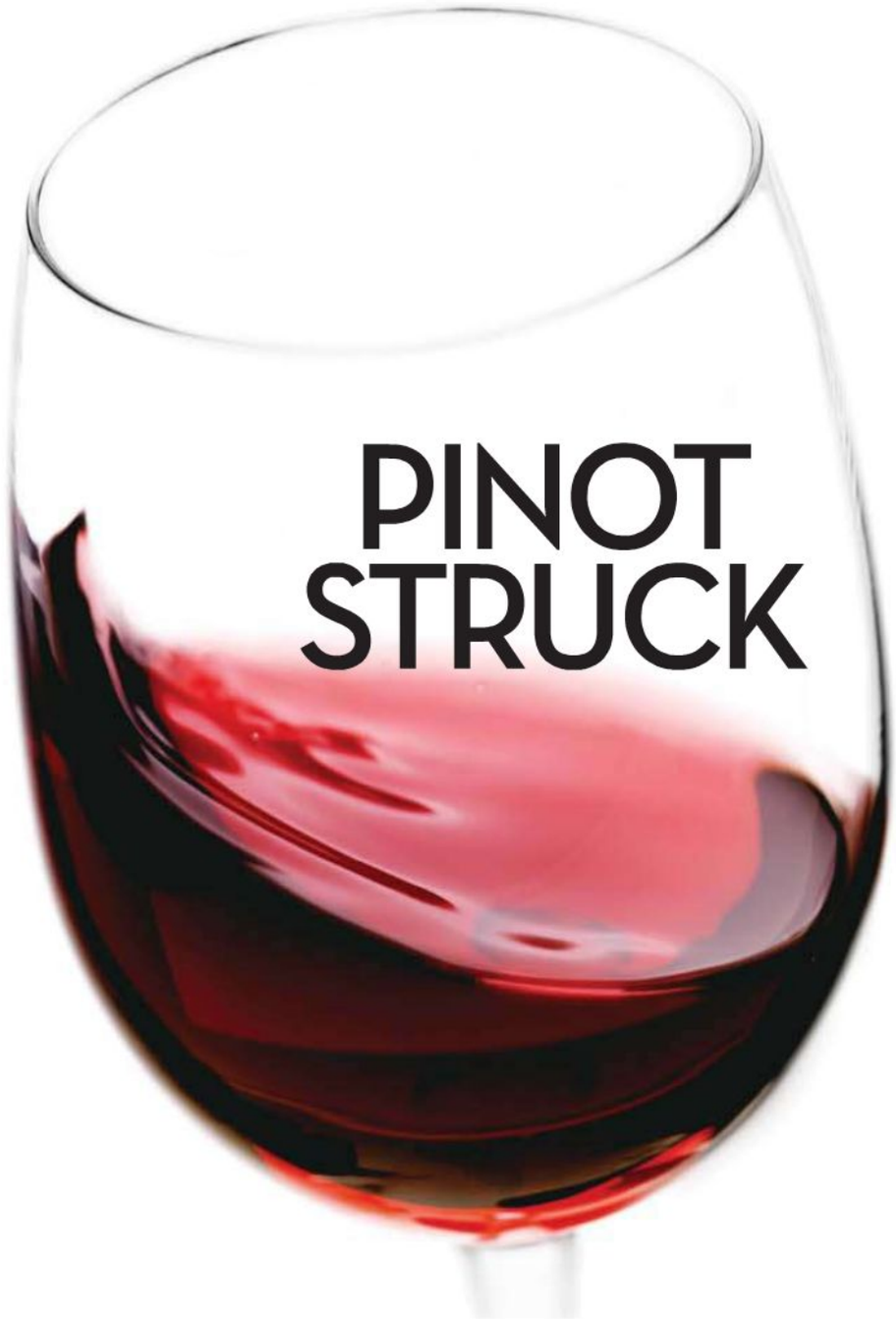
★★★★ ASPIRING FLATS BENDIGO CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2009 $23-$25

★★★★ MOUNT RILEY PINOT NOIR 2009 $19.95-$24.95

★★★★ RIBBONWOOD MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2009 $23.95

★★★★ STOCKMAN'S STATION CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2008 $23-$25

GAURIER / PHOTOLIBRARY



PINOT STRUCK

New Zealand Pinot Noir turned on the charm and our tasting panel came away starry-eyed, writes John Saker

New Zealand Pinot has always been known for fabulous fruit expression. That hasn't changed. What has been shifting as our Pinot vines put on more years (see page 134) is the wines' structure and how different elements such as acidity and tannins (see page 135) support the fruit. New Zealand's "Pinot attitude" was summed up by our Australian judge Nick Stock: "I love the ambition of New Zealand winemakers and their willingness to succeed... not easy with Pinot, which is such an elusive beast."

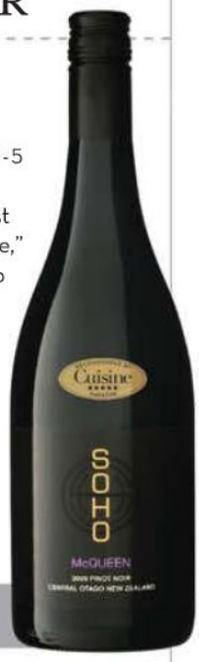
Our tasting tackled 242 Pinots, most from the 2008 and 2009 vintages. Neither year produced as many crackingly seductive wines as 2007, but there were still plenty of highlights, with 37 wines receiving four stars or more. Well over half of those awards were collected by one region – Central Otago.

1 TOP NZ PINOT NOIR

★★★★★

SOHO McQUEEN CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2009 $40 1-5

In this Central Otago Pinot structural complexity takes centre stage. "It almost has a three-dimensional tannin structure," enthused Nick Stock. "The tannins wrap themselves around the fruit and there's a beautiful stride to the finish." The wine's origin is immediately detectable in the out-there floral aromatics, which lead to a dark, plump palate. It has a polished, youthful purity, gambolling across the palate like a colt in a paddock. And what to eat with it? Five-spice roasted duck.



TOP WINE PROFILE

TAYLOR-MADE IN THE GIBBSTON

No one is prouder that our top Pinot was made from fruit grown in the Gibbston Valley than the winemaker himself, Grant Taylor. Kurow-born Taylor is a Gibbston pioneer; he has now had 17 vintages to know what the Gibbston can – and can't – do with Pinot.

"It's a sub-region that has made some of Central Otago's best and worst Pinots," he says. "But we're learning how to manage the Gibbston now. When we crop very low, down to one kilo per vine, the ripened fruit gives us that length and finesse that are the strengths of Gibbston Pinot."

The wine's texture, so admired by the tasting panel, is due in part to Taylor and in part to the Gibbston Valley. Rather than destem all the grapes, he included some whole bunches in the ferment. The stems are a source of tannin and add to the wine's structure. "And beside that," he says, "Gibbston tannins are very fine and integrated – you can't draw a line between the acidity and the tannins."

Taylor began making the McQueen Pinot Noirs for Aucklander Rachael Carter's astutely targeted Soho label with the 2008 vintage. From that year, his Soho McQueen Couture also impressed at this tasting, finishing fourth.

When asked the story behind the name McQueen, he thinks he knows the answer. "It's a tribute to that London fashion guy, isn't it? We don't have much fashion sense down here in Central."

5

2 ★★★★★ **GIBBSTON VALLEY CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2009 $42-$45** 1-5

This trailblazing Central Otago winery now sources fruit from around the region and the wines are made with precision by Christopher Keys (see page 139). This well-wrought synthesis of red and dark fruit flavours, fine tannins, subtle oak and a big, pristine fruit core exudes charm. An ideal table consort for beef cheeks braised with a hint of anise.



3 ★★★★★ **SPY VALLEY PINOT NOIR 2009 (MARLBOROUGH) $28.95** 3-5

BEST BUY

Right from the beginning, the Pinot vines at this Waihopai Valley winery have revelled in their situation. The wine has consistently delivered excellence at a good price. This latest rendition is classic New World Pinot, "compact, bright, taut, with fine, cedary tannins", noted Jeff Clarke.

TASTING RESULTS

5 STARS OUTSTANDING	11
4½ STARS EXCELLENT	3
4 STARS VERY GOOD	23
3 STARS GOOD	60
NO AWARD	145
TOTAL	**242**

TASTING PANEL Wine panel chair John Belsham, winemaker-owner of Foxes Island Wines (far right), was joined by (from left) highly experienced wine judge and wine consultant Jeff Clarke; associate judge Andrew Parkinson, fine-wine specialist at Negociants New Zealand; and Australian wine commentator Nick Stock, author of *The Penguin Good Australian Wine Guide*.





> 'When we crop very low, down to one kilo per vine, the ripened fruit gives us that length and finesse that are the strengths of Gibbston Pinot' - Soho winemaker Grant Taylor

4 ★★★★★ **SOHO McQUEEN COUTURE PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $50** - 7

Grant Taylor and Gibbston Valley combine for a second Top 10 wine with this rendition with aromas of a "very elegant lady's handbag" (John Belsham), which "tastes like a gentleman's wallet" (Nick Stock). Light but well-defined acidity carries a shapely, quite savoury, fruit parcel. Food match: farmed venison.

5 ★★★★★ **AKARUA PINOT NOIR 2009 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $38-$40** - 10

Fragrant, plush, velvety. All that irresistible Central Otago allure is on offer in this beauty from Bannockburn. Winemaker Matt Connell has used oak to good effect – a layer of toast and hazelnut mingles harmoniously with the dark, rich fruit notes. A baby now, it will develop beautifully over the coming years.

6 ★★★★★ **WHITEHAVEN MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2008 $26-$30** - 2

BEST BUY

This wine highlighted the role acidity can play in creating attractive highlights and shadows on the Pinot canvas. Rather than cut through the fruit, the gentle but firm acids support it and allow it to express itself, besides giving added crunch to the wine. Try it with Peking duck.

7 ★★★★★ **FRAMINGHAM PINOT NOIR 2009 (MARLBOROUGH) $34.95** - 3

A beguiling mix of red and dark berryfruit flavours, with just a hint of rosemary, is married to an edgy, well-defined structure. The result is a wine that is elegant in style and very expressive of its place. Tuna with ponzu sauce would be a fine companion at the table.

8 ★★★★★ **WAITIRI CREEK PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $40-$50** - 5

Now crafted by Stanford grad Jen Parr, the Waitiri Creek Pinot is perennially exciting. Made with predominantly Gibbston fruit, the depth of this wine is astonishing – it reaches right down and doesn't let go. Sophisticated, concentrated, very seductive.

9 ★★★★★ **DESERT HEART MACKENZIES RUN PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $36-$45** - 6

Bannockburn label Desert Heart has, in a relatively short time, established a strong quality ethos. This single-vineyard wine (Mackenzie was a much-loved vineyard canine) has a silky effortlessness and shows a fine balance between fruit sweetness and spice. Try it alongside a chargrilled salmon steak with salsa verde.

PINOT NOIR GOES WITH...

Pinot Noir is the decathlete of red wines at the table – with its great array of skills and its light-stepping brilliance, it can tango with a broad variety of meat dishes or schmooze with more strident seafoods such as smoked salmon.

Pinot also gets on with a number of delicacies in Asian cuisine. The following food accompaniment ideas demonstrate the wine's effortless versatility:

- Duck confit
- Quail (or any other game bird)
- Roast lamb with rosemary
- Coq au vin
- Chicken tikka masala (lightly spiced)
- Prosciutto-wrapped figs
- French onion tart
- Manuka-smoked salmon
- Crayfish bisque
- Any vegetarian dish dominant in lentils or mushrooms
- Creamy cheeses (brie, camembert) and mild cheeses (tomme de savoie)
- Mushroom risotto
- Classic steak béarnaise

BOTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON CREAGHAN; PORTRAIT BY KEN DOWNIE

10 ★★★★★ **MARTINBOROUGH VINEYARD TE TERA PINOT NOIR 2009 (WAIRARAPA) $29-$32** 🍷-4

The only Wairarapa representative in our Top 10, the latest Te Tera again delivers a very favourable quality/price ratio. Brambly aromatics, warm, sweet red fruit ("poached strawberry", noted Nick Stock) and grainy tannins come together in an arresting, demonstrative package. Try it with turkey and cranberry sauce.

★★★★★ **GOLDWATER MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2008 $22-$28** 🍷2-5

This is one of those finely etched Pinots. The closer you get, the more detail emerges. Jeff Clarke was taken with the "cigar-box cedary oak and the fruit purity behind that". Freshening acids offer lift and add to the overall deliciousness. It would go well with something gamy, such as wild boar.



4½

★★★★½ **AKARUA RESERVE PINOT NOIR 2009 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $55** 🍷-10

Dubbed the Versailles of the line-up because everything is on a grand scale using classic forms. Its rich, extravagant dark fruit (black cherry, boysenberry), hints of oak spice and velvety tannins were unanimously appreciated. Winemaker Matt Connell is obviously warming to his new gig at Akarua. Give it a few years in the cellar and it will really hit its straps.

★★★★½ **ALLAN SCOTT HOUNDS MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2009 $32-$36** 🍷1-6

Allan Scott's top of the range Pinot, named after the estate's Hounds Vineyard in the Wairau Valley, has a keen, border collie-like tension. Fresh, sweet-red and dark fruit notes, a sinewy texture and a tail that wags, all contribute to a wine brimming with youthful exuberance.

★★★★½ **VALLI WAITAKI VINEYARD PINOT NOIR 2008 (NORTH OTAGO) $54-$57** 🍷-10

The lure of limestone has drawn Pinot producers to the mighty Waitaki Valley, among them Valli owner-winemaker Grant Taylor, who also made our top wine. His latest effort for his own label has a rivetingly lovely core of still-sweet fruit, a twist of oak spice and a racy – yet airy – lightness. More wines like this, and the Waitak's stocks will surely rise.

4

★★★★ **ANTMOORE PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $29.95** 🍷3-5

This wine's exuberant attack of brambly red fruit, invitingly succulent, drew applause from Jeff Clarke: "There's plenty of oak in support, but it's in balance with that lovely concentrated primary fruit." It would be a superb match for some Otago-farmed smoked salmon.

★★★★ **ASPIRING FLATS BENDIGO CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2009 $23-$25** 🍷-3

Young and still a little locked in (give it a year in the cellar to find its feet), there is nonetheless a lively persistence and focus to this wine. Tobacco, spice and bergamot tea characters come through; the texture is a good mix of definition and fleshiness. If you can wait, have it with your 2011 Christmas turkey. [A]

★★★★ **BALD HILLS SINGLE VINEYARD PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $44-$48** 🍷-10

The award-winning combination of winemaker Grant Taylor and the Bald Hills vineyard continues with this stylish wine. Rich, floral perfumes are a precursor to a dense, dark palate that has a toasty oak lift and driving acids. Very lovable and very true to its Bannockburn origins.

★★★★ **BALD HILLS THREE ACRES PINOT NOIR 2009 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $30-$34** 🍷-10

This is the second vintage of what Bald Hills describes as its "early drinking" Pinot. Exuberantly floral and rich, the fruit floods the palate with dark velvet. "Has life, power and shape," noted Nick Stock. It delivers Central Otago excellence at a good price.

VINES AND YEARS

Vines, like people, age one year at a time. For many New Zealand Pinot producers, that's never fast enough.

Most of our Pinot vines are less than a decade old, while in the home of Pinot Noir, Burgundy, vines are not considered "adult" until they reach 25. The average age of vines in Burgundy's top vineyards is much older. The magic this venerability brings comes through in a number of ways – aromatic and taste complexities; deeper, more refined structures; and a more balanced wine overall.

Because older vines' roots have had time to deepen and spread, the influence of their site's soil also comes into play more.



TANNIN QUEST

Tannins are compounds that are found in a number of plants. In red wine (as in tea, where they are also present), we perceive them as a drying, astringent presence in the mouth. Their firmness ("grip"), together with the grapes' natural acidity, builds a framework that helps show off the soft fruit to full advantage.

Tannins also give a wine more ageing potential and have been shown to be very good for your heart. The key source for red wine tannins is grape skins. However, Pinot Noir skins are much lighter in tannin than varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Pinot producers have thus become adept at extracting tannins from other places, such as the seeds and stems. Before harvest, Pinot makers will taste seeds as well as grapes, just to make sure the seed tannins are ripe and ready.

★★★★ **BANNOCK BRAE BARREL SELECTION PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $42-$48** -6
Yet another wine from the Cairnmuir Rd side of Bannockburn to score well in this tasting (the vineyard borders on Akarua). Earthy forest-floor notes bed down nicely on a layer of oak toast. It handles itself in a relaxed, unhurried way and gets more elegant every minute it is in the glass.

★★★★ **CHARLES WIFFEN MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2009 $27.50** -5+
Like many Marlborough farmers, Charles and Sandi Wiffen grew grapes before launching their own label in 1997. This Pinot is tight but fleshy, with a savoury charm and freshness. "A wine with integrity and structure," said John Belsham.

★★★★ **CLOUDY BAY PINOT NOIR 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $58** -8
The texture has you thinking of crème de Pinot – it has that fluffy, airy quality that lets Pinot shine. Bright fruit and oak spice tango deftly across the palate, the tannins are well managed, and the finish is lengthy. A shapely, complete wine. [C]

★★★★ **CRAGGY RANGE PINOT NOIR CALVERT VINEYARD BANNOCKBURN CENTRAL OTAGO 2009 $49.95** -6
Craggy Range is not alone in making a Pinot from biodynamically grown Calvert Vineyard fruit (Felton Road and Pyramid Valley also get a share). Craggy's latest version is big, round and assertive, with plenty of juicy crunch and a creamy vanillin oak quality.

★★★★ **DOMAIN ROAD VINEYARD CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2008 $37** 2-5
This Pinot gets one thinking of the depth and stillness of a high country lake. There is a quiet reserve and beauty to its focused fruit core, and just a hint of something edgy and wild. The adjective "elegant" was used often. Save it to serve with your best duck confit.

★★★★ **DRUMSARA CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2008 $38-$44** 2-5
The country's hottest spot, the Alexandra basin, is the provenance of this big, juicy, pure expression. A rich, plump fruit presence – all dark berry notes with chocolate overtones – is held in place by firm, quite drying, tannins. Would go gangbusters with Chinese roast duck.

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nz pinot noir



Well over half the awards in this tasting were collected by one region, Central Otago

★★★★ **ELEPHANT HILL CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2008 $29** -3
Elephant Hill, like a number of Hawke's Bay-based wineries, looks to the south for grapes when it comes to Pinot Noir. The grapes for this wine were grown in Alexandra, and it delivers the succulent, bold, fruit-forward, velvety style for which this sub-region is renowned. [B]

★★★★ **ESCARPMENT VINEYARD PINOT NOIR 2009 (WAIRARAPA) $45** 2-5
"Lovely swirl of spicy complexity," noted Nick Stock. That's Martinborough – and Escarpment Pinot maestro Larry McKenna – for you. The region's signature Christmas cake spiciness and the accompanying rich tannins lend this wine real interest and stature.

★★★★ **HAWKSHEAD PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $38-$40** -7
Hawkshead has been a quality-driven label since it began planting its Gibbston Valley vineyard 10 years ago. This wine displays typical Gibbston complexity and drive: red and black fruit notes, a whiff of coffee, firm tannins and racy acidity. Not particularly subtle, but very effective.

★★★★ **KINGSMILL TIPPET'S DAM PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $39.95** -8
Excellent fruit concentration and flavour complexity mark this expression from Bannockburn (Tippet's Dam served as part of the old goldminers' sluicing systems). Kirschy fruit notes are joined by brooding licks of spice and leather. Try it with a chorizo-rich paella. [D]

★★★★ **LOCHARBURN PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $29-$35** -5
This Carol Bunn-made, Cromwell basin-grown Pinot flows like a large, slow-moving river. Round and softly textured with lashings of plush, dark fruit framed by an elegant tannin structure. The oak is a little forward, which was noted by some tasters. A fine partner for lamb rack with herbes de Provence.

★★★★ **LOWBURN FERRY HOME BLOCK CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2009 $42-$48** 2-7
The panel was initially divided over this wine. The 'yays' praised its sophistication, intensity and lithe texture; the 'nays' felt it overly rich and oaky. After a spirited discussion, there was agreement it had too much going for it to be presented as anything less than a sexy, four-star Pinot.

★★★★ **MAIN DIVIDE TEHAU RESERVE PINOT NOIR 2008 (WAIPARA) $32.95** 5-8
Thanks to a steady upward march in quality, Pegasus Bay's second-tier label, Main Divide, has become an annual must-taste for Pinot lovers. Quality Waipara Valley fruit was used to make this rendition, which is ripe, nicely structured, concentrated and rich in spicy, smoky complexity.



★★★★ MAP MAKER PINOT NOIR 2008 (MARLBOROUGH) $25-$30 -3
Marlborough producer Staete Landt adhered to its Abel Tasman theme with the name of recently launched sibling brand Map Maker. This, the first Pinot from the new label, is beautifully balanced. Lightish red fruit notes mingle with an endearing Campari-like bitterness.

★★★★ MOUNT RILEY PINOT NOIR 2009 (MARLBOROUGH) $19.95-$24.95 -4
BEST BUY
This is an irrepressibly joyous wine. It is light in style, full of bouncy, juicy raspberry and cherry sweetness, and framed by sound tannins. Its freshness, energy and persistence make it a perfect summer lunch Pinot.

★★★★ RIBBONWOOD MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2009 $23.95 -3
BEST BUY
The ribbonwood, or manatu, is New Zealand's tallest native deciduous tree and is common in Marlborough. Ribbonwood the wine label is an offshoot of Framingham, another Marlborough stalwart. Characterising this wine are ebullient floral perfumes and red fruit tastes, bright acidity and a silky mouthfeel. It would really sing with Toulouse sausage served with potato, parsnip mash and a dash of Dijon mustard.

★★★★ SAINT CLAIR PIONEER BLOCK 12 LONE GUM PINOT NOIR 2009 (MARLBOROUGH) $30.95-$32.95 -4
Much-decorated winemaker Matt Thomson and Saint Clair deliver again. Plenty of floral aromatic fireworks together with a layer of oaky richness lead on to a mouthful of punchy, ripe and juicy dark fruit. A crunchy texture brightens proceedings and a clean acidic blade drives the lengthy finish.

★★★★ STOCKMAN'S STATION CENTRAL OTAGO PINOT NOIR 2008 $23-$25 -5
BEST BUY
From the Wild Earth stable, Stockman's Station has regularly been seen on plenty of great-value lists. Generous in a fruit-forward, gently textured way, it is a truthful, unmanipulated wine. "An excellent example of good commercial New Zealand Pinot," said Jeff Clarke. A pizza well covered with artichoke hearts and feta would be a great match.

★★★★ WILD EARTH VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR 2008 (CENTRAL OTAGO) $40-$42 -8
Great sites, attention to detail and good winemaking (the busy Grant Taylor had a hand in this one, too) have been a Wild Earth constant. The fruit has been given full voice in this fragrant, juicy, focused expression. Still youthful and tight, it will only get better over the next year. Try it with a classic beef dish with a béarnaise sauce.

For complete wine-tasting listings visit **cuisine.co.nz** (three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed, contact the distributor (listed by letter below):
[A] NZ Wine Society, ph: 0800-809 463
[B] Procure, ph: 09-376 9385

In the 1870s, Frenchman Jean Désire Feraud had vines in the ground near Clyde in Central Otago, from which he made an award-winning "Burgundy Wine"

PINOT'S PREMIERE

We can't be sure when, where or by whom New Zealand's first Pinot Noir vine was planted. But we do know that by the late 19th century the grape was thriving in a number of New Zealand vineyards.

In the 1870s, Frenchman Jean Désire Feraud had vines in the ground near Clyde in Central Otago, from which he made an award-winning "Burgundy Wine". If its author had been Anglo-Saxon, we might now easily dismiss this "Burgundy Wine" as probably no more than a dubious red made from whatever variety was at hand. But would a Frenchman apply the name of the great French region so loosely?

We can only guess.

The Marist Brothers (who established today's Mission Estate Winery) were responsible for the first recorded planting of "Pinot varieties" in Hawke's Bay in 1889. Calling the shots at the time was the cheerful, robustly built Brother Cyprian Huchet, whose parents were winegrowers in the Loire. It is tempting to bestow on Brother Cyprian the mantle of New Zealand's original Pinot pioneer.

DRAWN FROM *PINOT NOIR: THE NEW ZEALAND STORY*, BY JOHN SAKER

TRY OUR TOP WINES

Taste our star-rated wines at our fine-wine Top 10 stores.

AUCKLAND

First Glass Wines & Spirits
Ph: 09-486 6415
first-glass.co.nz
$100 & under Champagnes
Mon 1 Nov 7pm $50
(bookings essential)
NZ Pinot Noir
Wed 10 Nov 7pm
$15 (no reservations)

Glengarry Victoria Park
Ph: 0800-733 505
glengarry.co.nz
Sat 30 Oct
1pm-4pm (free)

La Barrique
Ph: 09-638 5000
Champagne
154 Remuera Rd,
Remuera
Fri 22 Oct from 4pm
NZ Pinot Noir
31 Normanby Rd,
Mt Eden
23 Oct all day

Waiheke Wine Centre
Ph: 09-372 6139
waihekewinecentre.co.nz
Te Whau Restaurant
Thurs 11 Nov
6.30pm
(bookings required)
Food matched by
Marco Edwardes

HAMILTON

Hamilton Wine Co
856 Victoria St
Ph: 07-839 1190
Sat 20 Nov
12pm-4pm $15

TAUPO

Scenic Cellars
32 Roberts St
Ph: 07-378 5704
sceniccellars.co.nz
NZ Pinot Noir
Thu 4 Nov 6pm $20

NAPIER

Liquor King
78 Taradale Rd
Ph: 06-843 5879

NZ Pinot Noir
Fri 29 Oct (free)
3.30pm-6.30pm
Champagne and sparkling
Fri 3 Dec (free)
3.30pm-6.30pm

HAVELOCK NORTH

Advintage
Ph: 06-877 9754
advintage.co.nz
Fri 5 Nov (free)
3pm-5.30pm

WELLINGTON

Glengarry Thorndon Quay
Ph: 04-472 7051
glengarry.co.nz
Sat 30 Oct
1pm-4pm (free)

CHRISTCHURCH

Vino Fino
Ph: 03-365 5134
vinofino.co.nz
NZ Pinot Noir
Tue 9 Nov 6pm $20

TASTING NOTES

★★★★★
Outstanding quality

★★★★½
Excellent quality

★★★★
Very good quality

★★★
Good quality (website listings only)

Drink now, don't cellar

Drink now or cellar for up to two years from now

Not ready for drinking yet

RECOMMENDED BY Cuisine ★★★★★ MAGAZINE

RECOMMENDED BY Cuisine MAGAZINE

Tasting method All wines are tasted blind. If, after discussion, the tasters do not agree on a star rating, the wine will receive the rating given by the majority but dissenting comments will be included in the wine notes. The scores of winemaker judges cannot exceed those of other judges.

Availability All wines entered in *Cuisine* tastings must be readily available at the time of publication. However, high demand and a six-week lead time between tastings and publication can affect availability. If you cannot find the wines, contact the winery or distributor direct.

Prices Suppliers are asked to provide a retail price range for all wines entered in tastings. Prices do vary between vineyard and low-to-high volume outlets and cannot, therefore, be guaranteed. All prices are quoted in $NZ.

Recommended by *Cuisine* stickers Look for these top wines as your guarantee of quality.

Gold sticker Wines awarded five stars can wear the gold five-star Recommended by *Cuisine* sticker.

Burgundy sticker Wines awarded 4 1/2 and four stars are able to display the burgundy Recommended by *Cuisine* sticker.



Escape to luxury in the winterless north

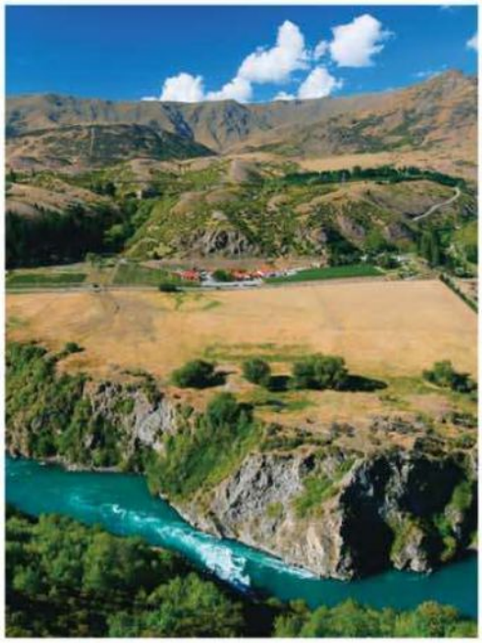
If you love pristine beaches and rolling green meadows but also want an award-winning vineyard, championship standard golf course and luxurious accommodation, Carrington Resort on the Karikari Peninsula has it all.

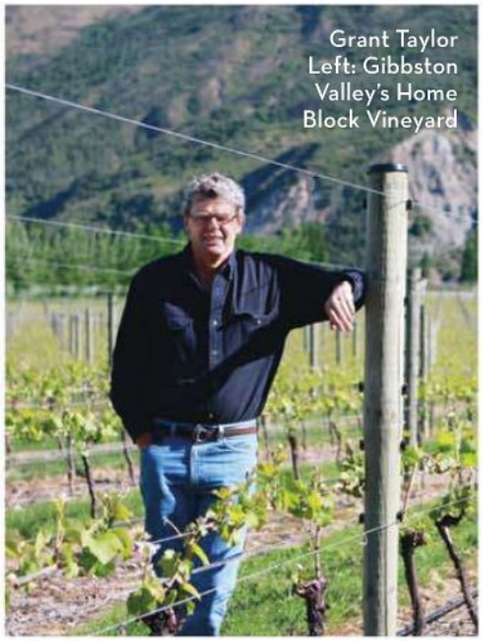
Savour a divine meal looking across to the sparkling ocean, take a walk along the secluded beach and sample some wines in the picturesque winery.

For reservations email res@heritagehotels.co.nz
phone 0800 368 888 or visit
www.heritagehotels.co.nz

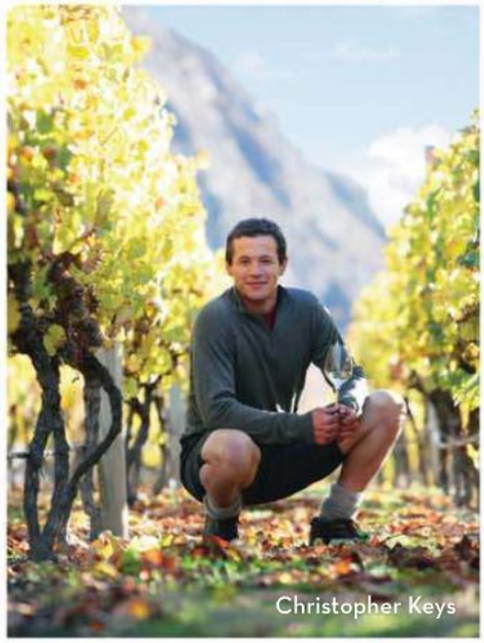
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Grant Taylor
Left: Gibbston Valley's Home Block Vineyard



Christopher Keys

THE WILD VALLEY BOYS

These Gibbston Valley Pinot sharpshooters have blazed a trail of breathtaking wines in unforgiving territory, writes **John Saker**

If growing great Pinot Noir is all about zeroing in on the wildest, edgiest, most marginal grape-growing spot you can find (which many believe to be the case), then Central Otago's Gibbston Valley has to be prime Pinot territory. For Grant Taylor and Christopher Keys, it is just that – with a large asterisk attached.

Between them, the two winemakers have accounted for the last 17 vintages at Gibbston Valley Wines. After taking up the reins at the pioneering winery founded by Alan "Godfather of the Gibbston" Brady in 1993, Taylor proceeded to craft top Pinots with almost assembly-line regularity. Many of his Reserve Pinots from the late 1990s are rightly regarded as Central Otago classics.

Christopher Keys took over from him in 2006. Keys is a literature graduate from the University of Otago with a fondness for Dostoyevsky and Chekhov. He thought about becoming a wine writer before succumbing to the lure of the ferment. He was serving as assistant winemaker at Sileni in Hawke's Bay (where he was in charge of Pinot Noir) when the call came from Gibbston Valley.

In the 30 days their regimes overlapped, the nature of the Gibbston Valley was discussed extensively (the two men have since become good friends and Taylor was the celebrant at Keys' wedding).

With its elevation (320-420 metres above sea level), its exposure to the weather from the west and its lower heat summation (days in which the temperature is high enough for vines to grow), the Gibbston is certainly not the kindest or easiest Central Otago wine sub-region. Although a cluster of

> "It won't work if you try to make a less expensive wine. You need courage to do it"

Central Otago's early pacesetters set up shop there, the success of later hot spots in the Cromwell Basin made many rethink their approach. Taylor and Gibbston Valley were not alone in making use of dark, plump, seductive fruit sourced east of the valley to flesh out their Gibbston harvests. The results were Central Otago Pinots, rather than Gibbston Valley wines.

It was a sound hedging policy, yet it didn't mean Taylor was turning his back on the Gibbston. He now owns a vineyard in the valley, from which he makes a wine under his Valli label, as well as others for the likes of Soho Wine Co, for whom he made our top Pinot Noir this year (see page 132).

"The Gibbston Valley has been underappreciated," he says. "It is right on the edge, but most years, with better viticulture, we can move things so as not to be so close to that edge. When you do that, you get fine wines with length of flavour and without elevated alcohol levels."

Keys agrees. In Central Otago he has noticed international wine commentators enthusing over the elegance of Gibbston Pinot, which he says is "lighter and more fragrant. There's a temptation to look at that lightness in a negative sense, but it doesn't come at the expense of intensity. The Gibbston forces you to play the quality game and get yields right down. It won't work if you try to make a less expensive wine. You need courage to do it."

Keys has so far made one single-vineyard Gibbston Pinot – Le Maître 2007 in honour of Alan Brady. More are planned. Newer wineries in the Gibbston, such as Brennan and Hawkshead, are also bringing more attention back to the beautiful, rough-cut corridor that can claim to be the cradle of Central Otago Pinot.

GRANT TAYLOR, JUDE GILLIES; CHRISTOPHER KEYS, MICHAEL THOMAS; VINEYARD, DALE GARDINER

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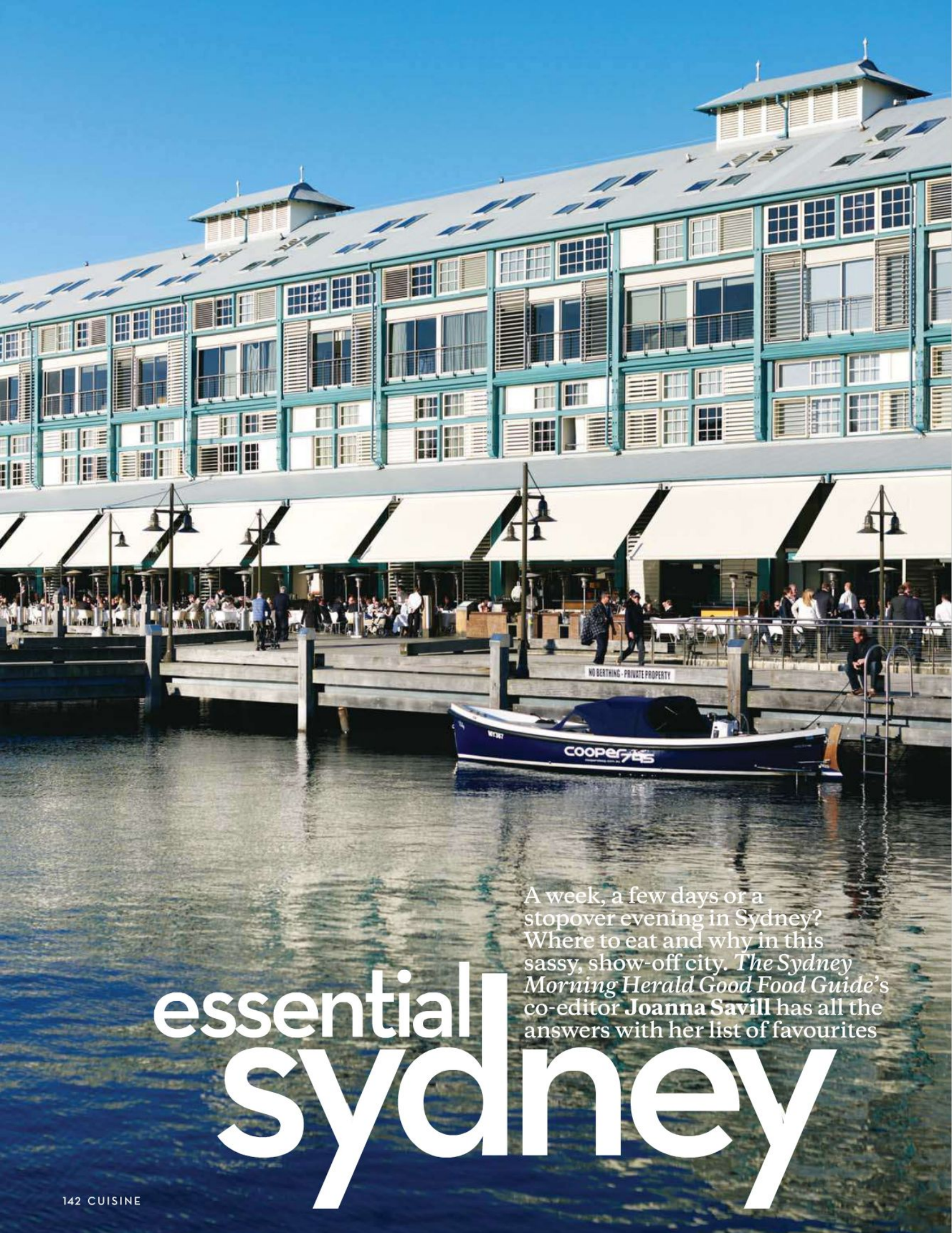
travel

Edited by Susan Buchanan



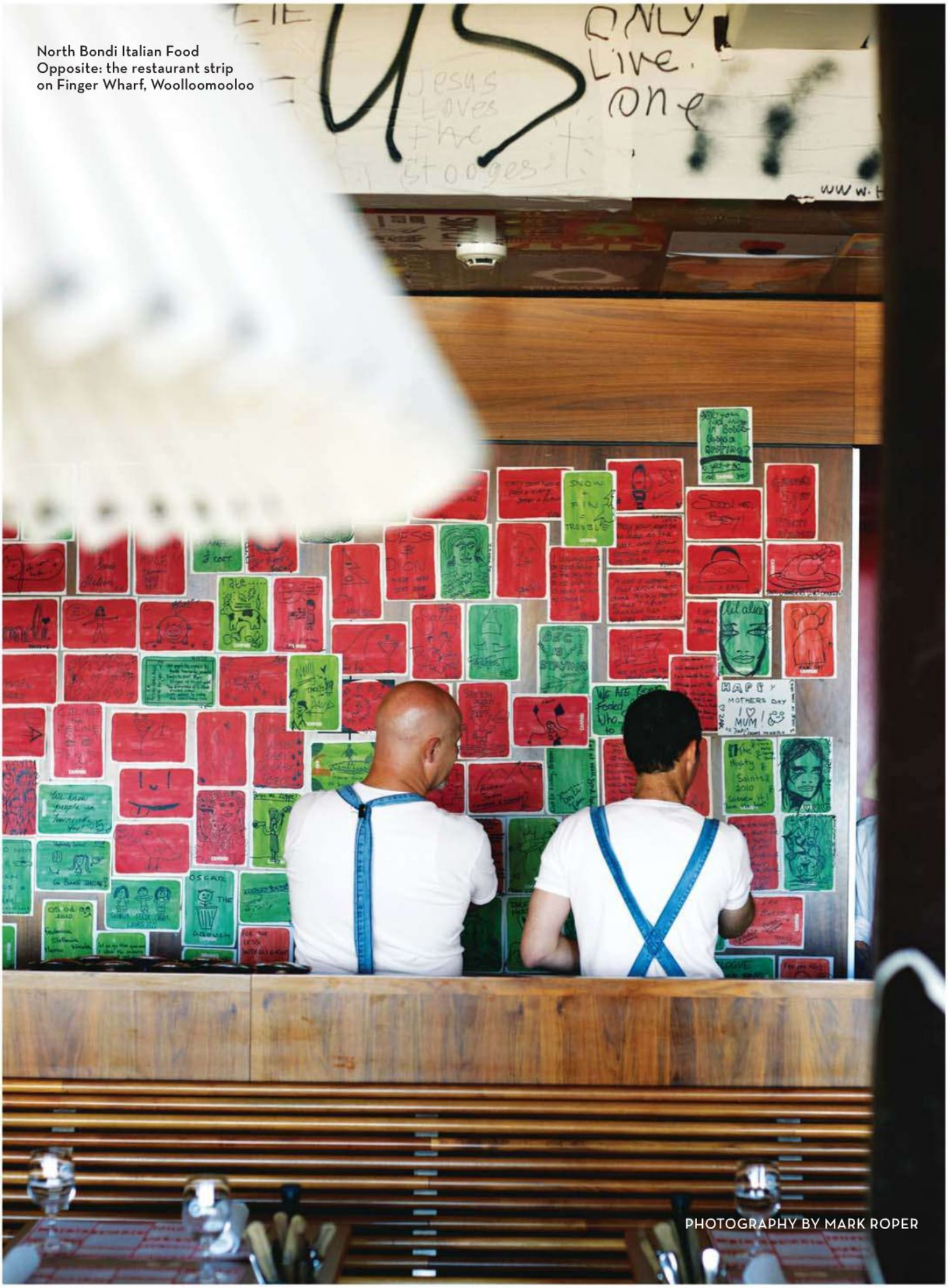
MARK ROPER

Icebergs Dining Room and Bar,
Bondi Beach



essential sydney

A week, a few days or a stopover evening in Sydney? Where to eat and why in this sassy, show-off city. *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide*'s co-editor **Joanna Savill** has all the answers with her list of favourites



North Bondi Italian Food
Opposite: the restaurant strip
on Finger Wharf, Woolloomooloo

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK ROPER

SO SYDNEY

Billy Kwong

Shop 3, 355 Crown St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9332 3300, kyliekwong.org

Kylie Kwong is the poster girl for all things green and sustainable, organic and free-range. She's also the Kylie of the TV screen and books and sparkling, home-style Cantonese-influenced cooking. There are no bookings here (unless you're with a group), but the staff are very practised at finding you when your table comes up. Go for wonderful wontons, fried eggs with homemade XO sauce and crisp-skinned chicken with brown rice vinegar.

Fish Face

132 Darlinghurst Rd, Darlinghurst, ph: 02-9332 4803

Sydney does Asian, Sydney does Italian and it also does seafood. The Fish Face team does all of the above, with a firm focus on the sea and a daily specials list that makes you want to order everything. Bookings are taken for early dining only. It's all a bit squishy-casual and service can occasionally be... um, interesting. But few places do seafood like Fish Face does seafood, with everything from excellent sushi to a steamed mud crab custard with enokis or a huge puffy omelette filled with prawns and bean sprouts drizzled with hoisin sauce. Good wines too and lots by the glass.

Golden Century

393-399 Sussex St, City, ph: 02-9212 3901, goldencentury.com.au

It's not the most user-friendly eatery in town. But it is an institution – not least with Sydney chefs chowing down after hours, and for all those tanks teeming with fish and crustaceans. Live seafood and daily Cantonese specials are the way to order. And if your waiter's not as helpful as you'd like, just ask for pipi with XO sauce, two courses of king crab (salt and pepper, and with noodles) or a steamed whole fish with ginger and shallots. It's open until very, very late (3am weekends).

Longrain

85 Commonwealth St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9280 2888, longrain.com.au

Take our tip and stake a spot at the bar. The infamous stick-drink caipiroskas and betel-leaf snacks are so good you may never move to the giant communal dining tables around the other side. But then you'd miss out on masterful modern Thai with a strong Sydney accent: crisp organic duck with green mango and holy basil, the signature eggnet with pork, prawn and peanuts, and a magnificent massaman of venison, using carefully sourced produce and plenty of flair.

North Bondi Italian Food

120 Ramsgate Ave, North Bondi, ph: 02-9300 4400, idrb.com

They queue and jostle at the bar at NBIF without batting an eye at the wait ahead. After all, there's Bondi Beach before them, the cool crowd around them and heaps of Italian-inspired bar snacks to go with the Campari. Yes, it's a scene and yes, you may need to spend some quality bar time before you get a seat to order antipasti, salumi and frutti di mare from the giant paper placemat menu. But who cares? This is Sydney at its coolest – baby bro to the great big Icebergs at the other end of the beach.

Otto Ristorante

6 Cowper Wharf Rd, Woolloomooloo, ph: 02-9368 7488, otto.net.au

The bling (on fellow diners) can be blinding but so can the sunlight dancing on the water at your feet. Imagine boats bobbing just metres away and the city just over the rise, a sprinkling of Sydney society, and a selection of oysters, maybe a classic carpaccio or a crudo of salmon to start. Try freshly rolled pasta or a nice bit of fish to follow, with a glass or two of something white or sparkling, and you're well into the Otto groove.

Imagine Universal's harissa squid on black ink noodles, a sultry sandwich of pine mushroom, silken tofu and chilli jam, and Christine Manfield's very latest extravagant, tropical dessert creation

Universal

Republic 2 Courtyard, Palmer St, Darlinghurst, ph: 02-9331 0709, universalrestaurant.com

Set indoors-outdoors in an inner-city courtyard with dramatic flame-coloured walls makes for an original dining space. Then there's Christine Manfield's pick-and-mix way with ingredients and flavours. With a nod to the Middle East and more than a wink at Asia, this inimitably global chef takes you on a whirlwind taste tour. Imagine harissa squid on black ink noodles, a sultry sandwich of pine mushroom, silken tofu and chilli jam, followed by a tropical, dessert creation.

KYLIE KWONG SUPPLIED BY PENGUIN



Saké



China Doll



Kylie Kwong of Billy Kwong



Otto Ristorante



Universal



North Bondi Italian Food



This row: Otto Ristorante; Otto's raw salmon with orange, roe and Chardonnay dressing served on pink sea salt





Otto chef Richard Ptacnik

SMALL PLATES & GREAT DROPS

Ash St Cellar

1 Ash St, City, ph: 02-9240 3000, merivale.com.au

Sydney's aspirations to laneway dining, Melbourne-style, are met in the alley outside The Ivy, the über-trendy complex of restaurants, bars, penthouse and pool club that continues to fill the gossip columns. This casual yet cosy conglomeration of wicker chairs and bar tables is a very pleasant indoor-outdoor lookout post for watching Ivy life go leisurely by. A great wine list and a Mediterranean tapas menu wrap this package up perfectly.

Berta

17-19 Alberta St, City, ph: 02-9264 6133, berta.com.au

Depending on your leanings, this is a backstreet wine-bar with food or a hidden snackery with great wine. In any case it's a wine-led way to spend an evening, given the eclectic list of Italian drops that keeps you interested while you are potentially queuing. Recommended eating orders include pâté with pickled cherries and moreish suckling pig. It's the new hot spot in Surry Hills so get there early if you want to get in.

Bodega

Shop 1/216, Commonwealth St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9212 7766, bodegatapas.com

It's noisy and busy and the food is fabulous – tapas-y with a South-American/Argentinian twist. Outwit the punters waiting for a restaurant table and head to the bar next door for empañadas with salsa criolla, "fish fingers" of kingfish sashimi on garlic toast with cuttlefish ceviche and mojama, or a yummy corn tamale with black beans and avocado. The 50s-quiffed Bodega boys' newie, Porteño, is on nearby Cleveland St (see Sydney News and Views, page 33), serving full Argentinian grills.

ASIAN STARS

Chat Thai

20 Campbell St, Haymarket, ph: 02-9211 1808 chatthai.com.au

The trick at Chat Thai – a slip of an eatery on Sydney's Thai Town strip with a permanent line outside – is to come between meals, or just for dessert. It's open from lunch to late suppers every day. The savoury menu is predominantly northern Thai/Lao, but the sweet selection changes twice a day and runs until late. Banana fritters, chewy pandan balls in warm coconut milk and the palm-sugar-filled dumplings are just some of the daily temptations.

China Doll

6 Cowper Wharf Rd, Woolloomooloo, ph: 02-9380 6744, chinadoll.com.au

China Doll is open-air, waterside, boisterous and busy. The menu is a journey through China and South-East Asia, with a distinctly Sydney-esque mod-Asian twist. And wild, Asian-inspired cocktails, too. You won't go wrong with salt and pepper squid, tea-smoked duck or a Penang curry of beef shin with steamed rice and Chinese greens on the side. And did we mention the cocktails?

Saké

12 Argyle St, The Rocks, ph: 02-9259 5656, sakerestaurant.com.au

The fit-out is fabulous – a splashy take on Japanese in bamboo, slate and stone. The menu ranges from classic sushi and sashimi, sliced and rolled, to a cheeky, highly flavoured Nobu-esque array of starters and mains. Grilled green tea scampi with yuzu dressing, miso butterfish, kara-age chicken with salsa and sauces all set the tone. A hip, happening spot in the heart of the pub-soaked Rocks.

Spice Temple

10 Bligh St, City, ph: 02-8078 1888, rockpool.com.au

This bordello-like basement is Neil Perry's clever tribute to regional Chinese – mostly Sichuan, Yunan, Hunan and Xinjiang – layered with chilli: fresh, cured, fermented and dried; cumin, ginger and tingling Sichuan pepper. Don't miss three flavours eggplant (mixed with garlic, coriander and spiced minced pork); stir-fried minced quail with egg custard; white-cut chicken and cumin-fragrant northern Chinese lamb pockets. Spice Temple Melbourne is slated to open on October 25.

Justin North is the Kiwi star of the Sydney dining scene and deservedly so. His intricate, delicate, highly seasonal cooking at his serious restaurant Bécasse is unfailingly creative

BIG TICKET ITEMS

Bécasse

204 Clarence St, City, ph: 02-9283 3440, becasse.com.au

Justin North is the Kiwi star of the Sydney dining scene and deservedly so. His intricate, delicate, highly seasonal cooking is unfailingly creative, and service under his wife Georgia North impeccable. Dishes include confit miso blue-eye trevalla and smoked scallop with sautéed cuttlefish and buckwheat; or forgotten vegetables in smoking cedar with pork jowl and scratchings; and milk-fed veal baked in coffee and clay. Monthly producers' lunches are held to highlight the industrious people behind his produce – everyone from saffron growers to goat farmers. It's serious, sustainable city dining at its very best.

JUSTIN NORTH SUPPLIED

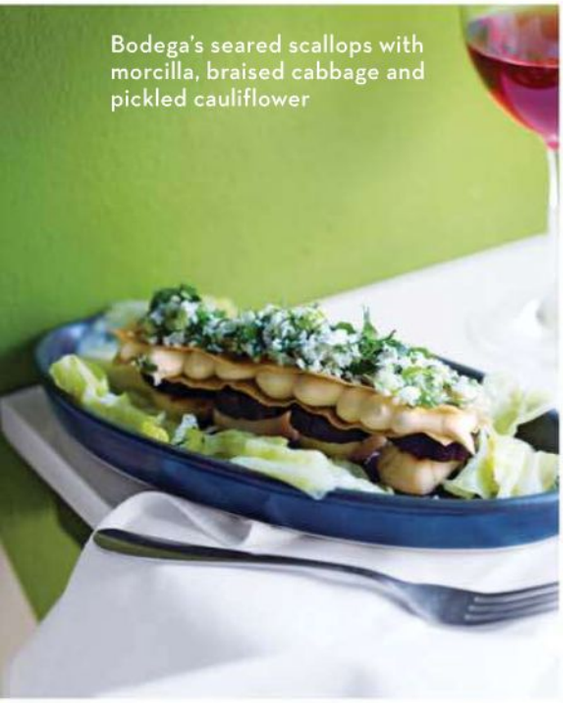


Saké



China Doll (and right)





Bodega's seared scallops with morcilla, braised cabbage and pickled cauliflower



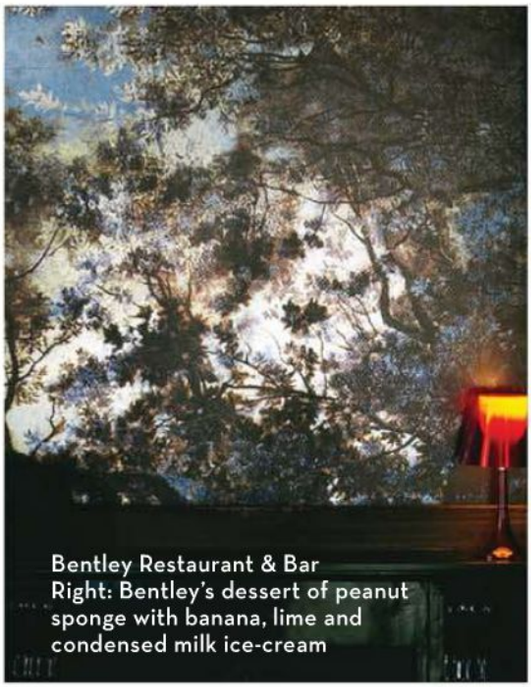
Elvis Abrahanowicz (left) and Ben Milgate of Bodega



Spice Temple



Justin North, Bécasse



Bentley Restaurant & Bar
Right: Bentley's dessert of peanut sponge with banana, lime and condensed milk ice-cream



Berowra Waters Inn

Via east or west public wharves, Berowra Waters, ph: 02-9456 1027 berowrawatersinn.com

You can drive but why would you when you can fly?

There are regular seaplane runs to this iconic riverside restaurant, tucked beneath the cliff-banks of the Hawkesbury River, north of Sydney, designed by Glen Murcutt, one of Australia's most lauded architects. On arrival, you'll be lulled by expert contemporary French-Australian cooking, top-drawer produce, fine service and wine and the slap of the water outside the louvred windows. For seaplane bookings (and menus) check the website.

Quay

Overseas Passenger Terminal, The Rocks, ph: 02-9251 5600 quay.com.au

Many times Restaurant of the Year, and now ranked 27th on the World's 50 Best list, Quay has notched up the accolades. It's no fluke, given chef Peter Gilmore's endlessly clever working of textures, colours, tiny flowers, herbs, shoots and plants – grown specially for the restaurant as well as sourced around the world. From his signature sea pearls – a play on everything from pearl meat to abalone – to an ultra-delicate crab congee, it's a sensual experience. Desserts, including a multi-textured chocolate, wild cherry and crushed meringue combination, are sublime.

Rockpool Bar & Grill

66 Hunter St, City, ph: 02-8078 1900 rockpool.com

Grand Central Station meets Gotham City in this smoky, bustling, ever-so-monumental steakhouse with the open kitchen, rotisserie grills, monster wine list and good, old-fashioned hearty food (a side of macaroni cheese, anyone?). The pony-tailed Neil Perry's RB&G (as it's quickly become known) has become a city landmark, such is his well-known genius for reinvention as well as his sheer hard work and enduring high standards. Much is made of the tender, succulent beef – dry-aged, different feed regimes – as well as the sustainably sourced seafood. A Sydney experience not to be missed.

WATERSIDE DINING

Icebergs Dining Room and Bar

1 Notts Ave, Bondi Beach, ph: 02-9130 3120, idrb.com.au

The surf views are spectacular, cocktail hour is compulsory and the deceptively simple but sumptuous menu an attraction all of its own. Start with a plate of Marchetti affettati (various bespoke-cured salami) and move on to a whole, lemon-marinated Barossa chook for two carved at the table and served with wild chicory pesto, or fish al cartoccio (steamed in a paper bag). Prices can be princely but so is the outlook.

Manly Pavilion

West Esplanade, Manly, ph: 02-9949 9011, manlypier.com.au

On the harbourside of Manly, this 1930s bathers' pavilion conversion has front-row seats over the famous ferry wharf (making it an easy ride from town for a long lunch). Chef Jonathan Barthelmess has a talent with modern Mediterranean: raw fish with white balsamic; stracci with pork and fennel meatballs; risotto cooked to order. Pretty food to match the very pretty panorama. It was also named Best New Restaurant in this year's *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide*.

Pilu at Freshwater

Moore Rd, Harbord, ph: 02-9938 3331, piluatfreshwater.com.au

It's not Italian but Sardinian, with a much-lauded wine list to match, set against a backdrop of surfbreaks and sand. High above a beautiful beach in a heritage house, try saffron malloreddus (Sardinina pasta shells) with goat and chestnut ragù and crunch down on Sardinian flatbread (carta da musica) with olive oil. The suckling pig is legendary, fish soup fabulous and seadas (a fried ricotta raviolo drizzled with wild honey) out of this world.

GREAT UNDER $30 MAINS

Bird Cow Fish

Shops 4 & 5, 500 Crown St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9380 4090 birdcowfish.com.au

It's a café-cum-bistro with good cooking, great produce and a lovely vibe. The signature hanger steak with shoestring fries costs just a little more in the restaurant side of the room ($35) but linger over shared plates in the espresso bar and you'll pay just $29.50; the same price for beer-battered fish, also with fries. Equally comforting is a terrine of the day or a salad of poached egg, white anchovies, grana and prosciutto ($18.50).

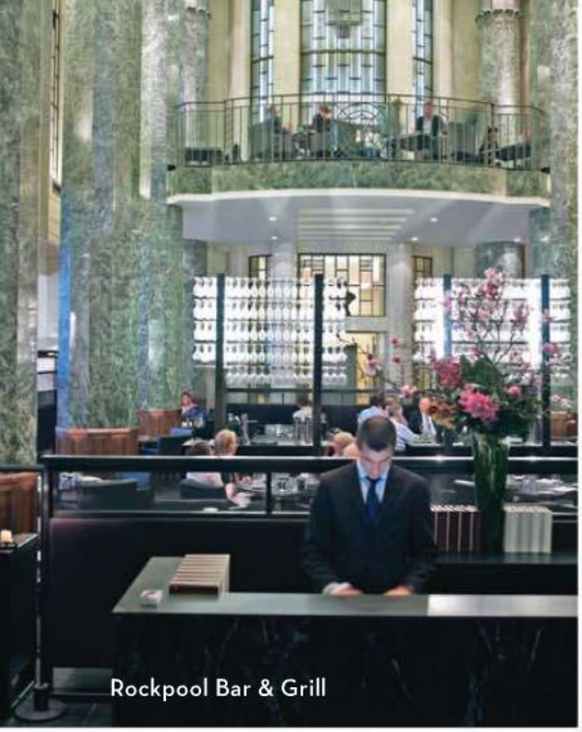
Bloodwood

416 King St, Newtown, ph: 02-9557 7699 bloodwoodnewtown.com.au

Small plates and sharing things, with a good wine list and a mixed crowd (think students, artists, inner-city intellectuals) make this a new favourite haunt in this neck of the woods. If you're browsing Newtown's funky shops and feel like a delicious chickpea pancake

Quay is ranked 27th on the World's Best 50 Restaurants list and it's no fluke, given chef Peter Gilmore's endlessly clever working of textures, colours, tiny flowers, herbs, shoots and plants

BEROWA WATERS INN SUPPLIED



Rockpool Bar & Grill



Icebergs (and right)





Quay



Quay's confit of shaved squid, red core radishes, garlic custard, violets and rosemary flowers served with roasted squid consommé
Right: Quay chef Peter Gilmore





Berowra Waters Inn



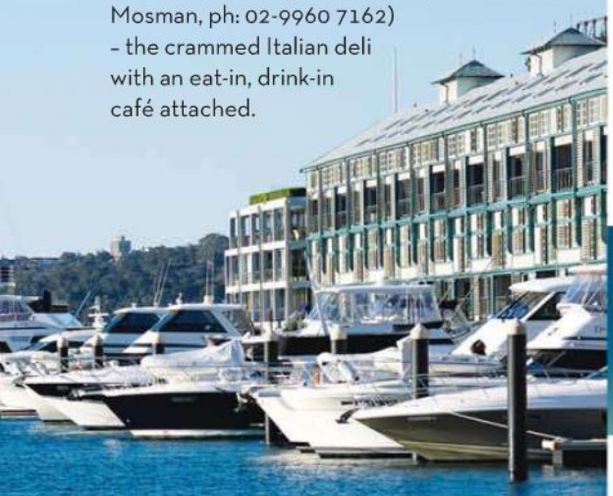
Alex Herbert, Bird Cow Fish



Hugos Bar Pizza

THE CAFÉ SET

Bills, the original Sydney café of excellent breakfasts and communal tables fame, (423 Liverpool St, Darlinghurst, ph: 02-9360 9631) is still pumping out the ricotta hotcakes and juices. Serious caffeine nerds get their fix at **Single Origin** (60-64 Reservoir St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9211 0665) with their very own choice of bean. And origin. Another boutique roaster that's grown much much bigger, **Toby's Estate** (129 Cathedral St, Woolloomooloo, ph: 02-9358 1196; cnr Manning and Macleay Sts, Potts Point, ph: 02-8356 9264) offers immaculate crema and a nice line in organic tea, too. **Le Monde** is *the* hot new address, mostly due to its excellent coffee range but also for its famous breakfast dégustation ($25 per head, including coffee, 83 Foveaux St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9211 3568). And the more genteel northside is not forgotten, with **Fourth Village Providore** (5A Vista St, Mosman, ph: 02-9960 7162) – the crammed Italian deli with an eat-in, drink-in café attached.



THE DRINKS LIST

Sake and its feistier sister shochu are top on the **Toko** and **Tokonoma** lists – two neighbouring bars (fab décor) in ever-cool Crown St, Surry Hills (490 Crown St, ph: 02-9357 6100). Great bar food too. For late nights, head to **Apéritif** in Kings Cross (7 Kellett St, ph: 02-9357 4729) for Mediterranean-inspired eating and a marvellous wine list. Open until 3am weekends. **Zeta Bar** in Hilton Sydney (488 George St, ph: 02-9266 2000) is the perfect city hang: smart, good drinks, celeb chef Luke Mangan's **Glass** restaurant next door. Meanwhile, **Opera Bar** goes off almost every night as the office crowd head to Circular Quay (lower concourse, in the shadow of the Sydney Opera House sails, ph: 02-9247 1666) for many very happy hours indeed. Serviceable shared-plate food, live music (often), pulsing vibe. For full-frontal views of city lights, **Altitude** on top of the Shangri-La Hotel (176 Cumberland St, The Rocks, ph: 02-9250 6123) is a bar, with hatted restaurant, that never goes out of style.

with Persian feta, mushrooms in red wine, or lamb kibbeh with steamed eggplant and kale ($15, $17 and $25 respectively), go no further.

Café Sopra

81 Macleay St, Potts Point, ph: 02-9368 6666, and at 16 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay, ph: 02-8243 2700

With the fabulous Fratelli Fresh produce stores attached (and there's another in Danks St, Waterloo, too), you'd be disappointed if the Italian-accented food at Café Sopra wasn't fresh, simple, produce-driven and fabulous. Luckily, it's all of the above. Small wonder that it's packed out. No bookings (again, sorry!) but worth waiting for the pick of the blackboard: vitello tonnato, a salad of shaved fennel and rocket, osso buco, terrific schnitzel with pickled red cabbage. It's whatever's fresh that day – and mostly around $25.

Marque

355 Crown St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9332 2225, marquerestaurant.com.au

Winner of *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide*'s 2011 Restaurant of the Year, chef Mark Best is also constantly at work with textures, tastes and techniques to make some of the city's most exciting and surprising food. Even the house-baked bread is sublime. From his magical beetroot and foie gras macarons to scampi with lemon curd, vadouvan (a south Indian spice paste), lettuce and burnt fennel, or a Michel-Bras-like plate of organic vegetables with ham consommé, each morsel is extraordinary.

It's an unlikely room but Tomislav is a promising springboard for a chef who's done his time at the likes of Sydney's Aria and The Fat Duck in the UK

Hugos Bar Pizza

33 Bayswater Rd, Kings Cross, ph: 02-9357 4411, hugos.com.au

It's definitely a bar, and a destination drinking-hole at that, but it's also a pretty good pizza stop with style. Start at around $18 for a classic margherita or mushroom with taleggio. Pumpkin, zucchini and gorgonzola is a big hit. Splurge on some spicy salt calamari with lemon aïoli to nibble on while you wait (starters from $18 also) and linger at the bar afterwards.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Bentley Restaurant & Bar

320 Crown St, Surry Hills, ph: 02-9332 2344, thebentley.com.au

Brent Savage is one creative chef and Bentley co-owner Nick Hildebrandt has highly imaginative taste in wine. The combination is irresistible. The ultra-modern menu is a series of unlikely tidbits, lines of "dust", things that pop and melt and fuse in the mouth. A bargain lunchtime tasting menu ($55) takes you from smoked eel parfait with white soy and seaweed through pullet egg with pork bubble to toasted banana marshmallow with warm banana milk. Try their great vego dégustation.

Tomislav

2/13 Kirketon Rd, Darlinghurst, ph: 02-9356 4535, tomislav.com.au

It's an unlikely room on the edge of Kings Cross but a promising springboard for chef Tomislav Martinovic, who has done his time at the likes of Sydney's Aria and The Fat Duck in the UK. They're flocking for his basmati rice risotto, Scotch fillet with bone marrow and horseradish cream, and particularly for his fabulous, deconstructed desserts – such as lemon cheesecake in little dots and cubes, with celery and mandarin sorbet. As Tomislav likes to say, "It's all about texture."

About as far away from the lawns as you can get.



New Pathfinder 450T.

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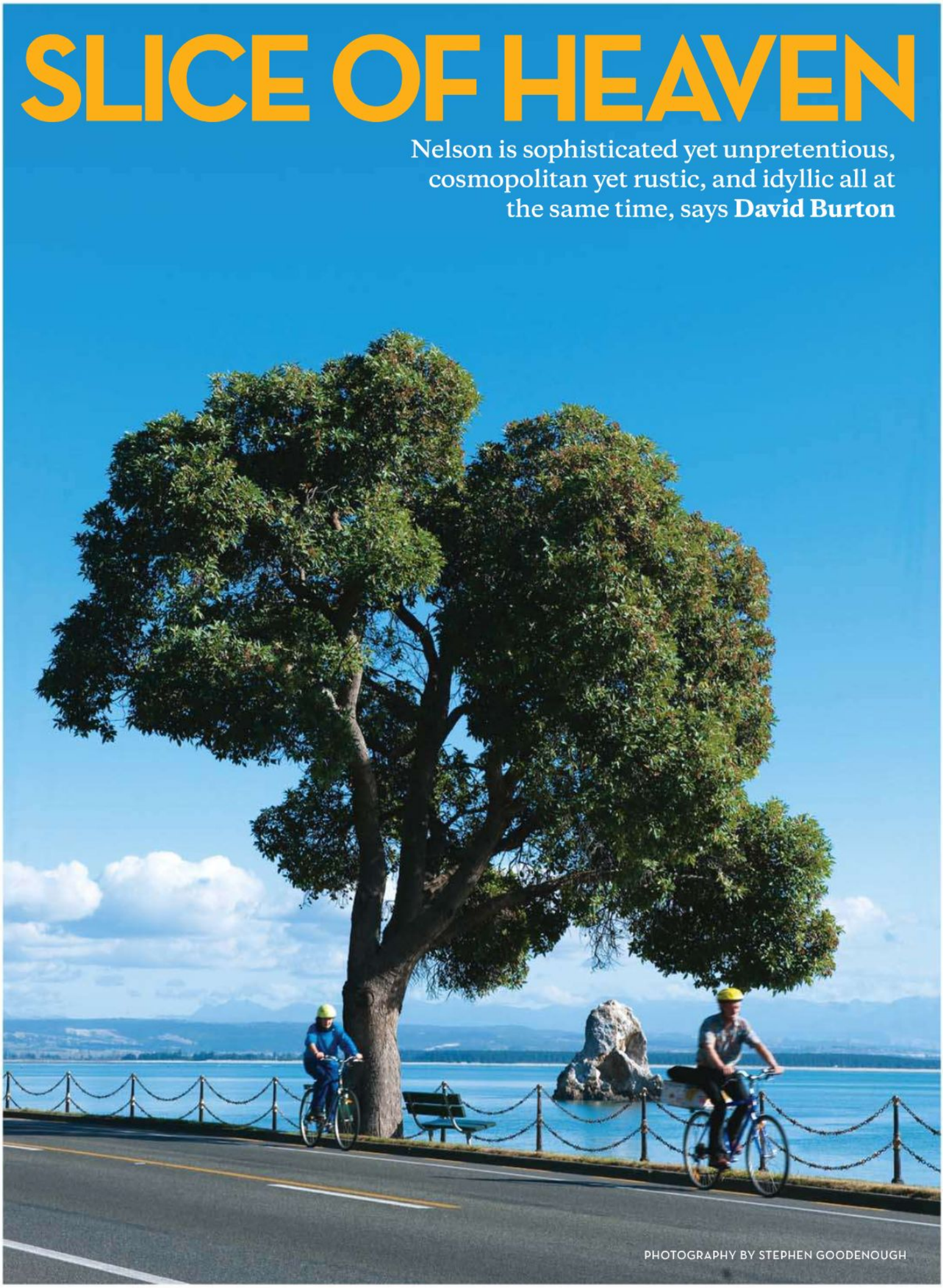
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SLICE OF HEAVEN

Nelson is sophisticated yet unpretentious, cosmopolitan yet rustic, and idyllic all at the same time, says **David Burton**



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN GOODENOUGH

Each year Nelson engages in a tussle with Marlborough and Tauranga for the title of sunniest province in New Zealand. This may sound childish, but it matters to Nelson, where everything revolves around the sun. Not only does the sun inspire the famously laid-back lifestyle, but it drives the local economy, providing enough rays in autumn to ripen the great crops of the Mediterranean – grapes, olives, tomatoes, stone fruit, apples, hops and berries.

Beckoning like an antipodean California, Nelson has also attracted hordes of permanent migrants, not only from around New Zealand but from Britain, North America, Scandinavia, Switzerland and especially Germany. Since jobs are limited, such migrants typically create their own – as artists, crafts people, food artisans, winegrowers, organic market gardeners, homestay operators and restaurateurs. (Nelson now has well over a hundred restaurants and – incredibly – seven artisan coffee roasters.)

Alternative lifestylers, religious groups and political activists of all sorts find refuge in Nelson, including Zen Buddhists and just about every obscure fundamentalist Christian sect that ever existed. Geographically speaking, Nelson may be provincial, but in outlook, it's downright cosmopolitan.



The Boat Shed Café
Opposite page: cycling along Wakefield Quay



Bouterey's at 251
Below: Matt Bouterey







Hopgood's Restaurant & Bar's Kevin Hopgood (right) and chef Aaron Vallantyne
Left: their duck with sweet carrot purée and quince jus

In Nelson, everything revolves around the sun. Not only

RESTAURANTS

Boat Shed Café

More a restaurant than a café, this waterside idyll is now in the capable hands of chef-patron Daniel Monopoli. The menu, which changes daily, includes a "trust the chef" set menu option that formerly served Dan so well at the Amisfield winery restaurant in Central Otago.
350 Wakefield Quay, ph: 03-546 9783, boatshedcafe.co.nz

Bouterey's at 251

In London, Matt Bouterey cooked for the likes of Gary Rhodes and Marco Pierre White. Returning home to New Zealand, he fell in love with Nelson and opened a contemporary fine dining restaurant in the most unlikely of locations, suburban Richmond. His chefs are regularly sent out to nearby farms to dig the produce.

The meals are very fairly priced considering the laborious preparation, and worthy of a special journey. Bouterey's was awarded Best Smart Dining Regional in the *Cuisine* NZ Restaurant of the Year Awards both this year and last.
251 Queen St, Richmond, ph: 03-544 1114, boutereys.co.nz

Hopgood's Restaurant & Bar

Chef-patron Kevin Hopgood presents intricate, multilayered dishes, showcasing local organic vegetables, wines, olive oils, saffron and cheeses. Located in a main street heritage building, with famously good service, Hopgood's is enormously popular with locals and, most unusually for Nelson, stays busy even after the tourists leave in autumn.
284 Trafalgar St, ph: 03-545 7191, hopgoods.co.nz

Mint Dining Room

Set in a tiny side-street cottage that formerly housed Rosy Glow Chocolates, Mint is owned by Nelson-trained chef Grant Dicker and his wife Katie-Jane. The upscale bistro menu champions the area's great seafood and produce.
20 Harley St, ph: 03-546 7092, mintdining.co.nz

Sachi Sushi & Seafood Bar

Nothing to look at from the outside, but beautifully fitted out in Japanese minimalist style within, Sachi offers modern Hawaiian-Californian-style sushi rolls, nigiri and sashimi, making good use of freshly landed Nelson fish.
19 New St, ph: 03-546 6277

The Boat House

Not to be confused with the nearby Boat Shed, the funky old building was formerly headquarters to the Iron Duke Sea Scouts. Now a private social club featuring regular live music, it is open to non-members



Mint Dining Room's ginger parkin with rhubard crumble, custard ice-cream and muscovado sauce



Deville's Geoff Mclean



Daniel Monopoli, chef-patron at Boat Shed Café

does it inspire the famously laid-back lifestyle, it drives the local economy

from Wednesday to Saturday for reasonably priced, well-cooked lunches and dinners served on the balcony overlooking Nelson haven.
326 Wakefield Quay,
ph: 03-548 7646

CAFÉS AND BARS

Deville

While it has yet to threaten Morrison Street Café, Deville is Nelson's chic coffee bar owned by Geoff and Evan McLean. Its long planted terrace leads into a garden on a quiet side street, while the city hums not 50 metres away. Full food service during the day, while the bar cranks up in the evening, with platters offered.
22 New St, ph: 03-545 6911

Harry's Bar

"Harry" is in fact Howard, but you can't miss the co-owner of this stylish cocktail bar – he's the dude with thick-rimmed glasses and mop of black hair who looks like part of Andy Warhol's entourage. The dining area offers pan-Asian food. A long wall hung with art champions local painters. Good local beer list.
306 Hardy St,
ph: 03-539 0905

Kush

This tiny boutique coffee roastery with public espresso counter is very alternative, boasting beans that are canopy-grown under forest cover in addition to being organic free-trade. If you can get past the cannabis connotations of names like Lebanese Red and Afghani Black, you'll find these blends richly flavoured.
6 Bridge St,
ph: 03-539 4793, kush.co.nz

Morrison Street Café

Set in a lovely old character building with a pleasant deck and serving good coffee and consistent food, this is a Nelson institution, patronised year round by locals, some of whom visit practically daily.
244 Hardy St, ph: 03-548 8110,
morrisonstreetcafe.co.nz

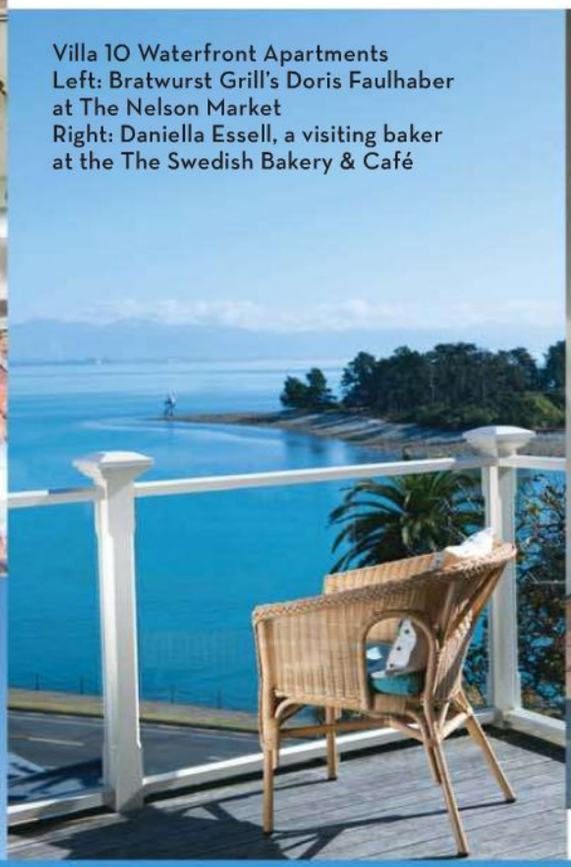
The Free House

Set in a renovated church on the city fringes, this independent pub is not tied to any brewery and it serves an ever-changing menu of local and national real ales, hand-pumped from casks. There's a good local wine selection, too. Order pizza and snacks at the bar, or bring your own food.
95 Collingwood St,
ph: 03-548 9391,
thefreehouse.co.nz

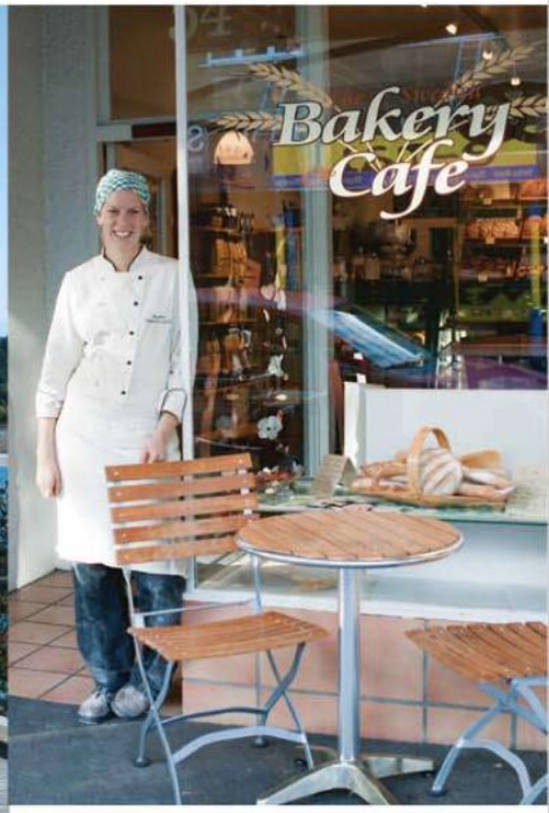
Zumo Coffee House

A lively new arrival upon Nelson's crowded coffee-roasting scene, Zumo occupies a former car yard and showrooms, offering a huge communal table where, most unusually, having purchased your coffee, you are welcome to bring your own lunch to consume on the premises. Naturally, shop and office workers, half-starved artists and young mums all do.
42 Rutherford St,
ph: 03-548 7405, zumo.co.nz





Villa 10 Waterfront Apartments
Left: Bratwurst Grill's Doris Faulhaber at The Nelson Market
Right: Daniella Essell, a visiting baker at the The Swedish Bakery & Café





Beckoning like an antipodean California, Nelson has

PRODUCERS, FOOD STORES AND MARKETS

Guyton Fisheries

Right next to New Zealand's busiest fishing port, Guyton sells famously fresh fish. A window inside the shop allows customers to watch the fish being filleted. There's a satellite store in the Richmond Mall.
270 Wakefield Quay, ph: 03-548 7295, guytons.co.nz

L'Artisan

Julie Cahusac de Caux and Charlie Ryan make ciabatta, sourdough, croissants and pastries at their Founders Heritage Park bakery. They also operate a stall at the Nelson Market each Saturday.
Founders Heritage Park, 87 Atawhai Drive, ph: 03-539 0009, lartisan.co.nz

Nelson Farmers' Market

A true farmers' market that deals only in food sold by the producers themselves: find free-range eggs, nuts, fresh fruit, vegetables and berries, salamis and sausages, olives, baked goods, mustards, fresh flowers and seedlings and more.
Fashion Island, cnr Hardy & Morrison Sts, marketground.co.nz/fmnznelson Wed 3pm-6pm (12pm-4.30pm in winter)

O'Neills Gourmet Butchery & Delicatessen

Aged beef, continental cuts of meat and a wide range of poultry and game underpin this old school butchery, and are used by the resident chef to make sausages, terrines, pâtés and take-home dinners, dips and salads.
Shop 71, Richmond Mall, Queen St, Richmond, ph: 03-544 5034

Swedish Bakery & Café

Owners Emil Eriksson and Camilla Jakobsson are expert Swedish bakers who bring out a young baker each year from Sweden for work experience. Besides the rye sourdough with fennel and caraway seeds you might expect, they also produce fantastic white sourdough, French baguettes and ficelles.
54 Bridge St, ph: 03-546 8685

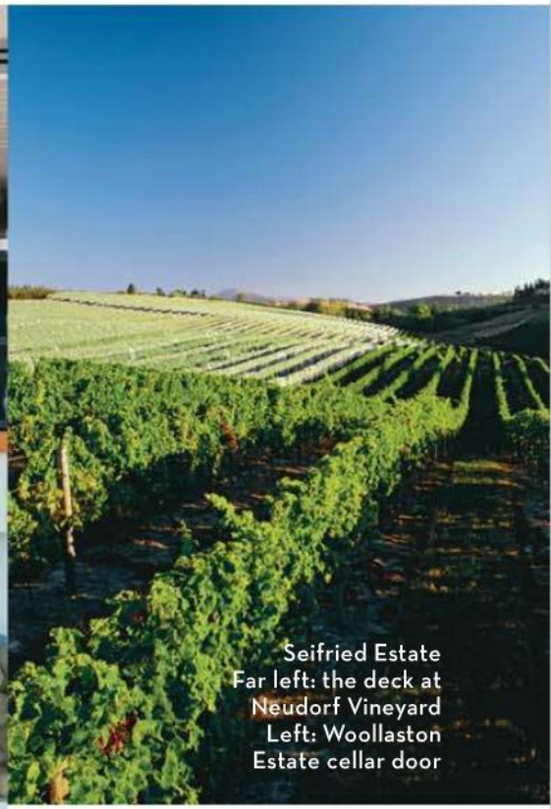
The Nelson Market

The oldest market in Nelson, and still by far the biggest, busiest and most colourful. Among the stalls selling handmade jewellery, bric-a-brac, second-hand books and organic produce, you'll find Pic's artisan peanut butter, Schnapp Dragon liqueurs and whiskies, and Proper hand-cooked crisps.
Montgomery Square, nelsonmarket.com, Sat 8am-1pm

KEVIN JUDD







Seifried Estate
Far left: the deck at Neudorf Vineyard
Left: Woollaston Estate cellar door

also attracted hordes of permanent migrants from New Zealand and overseas

WINERIES

Greenhough Vineyard

Greenhough's wonderfully weighty, Rieslings and rich perfumed Pinot Noirs are an expression of long Nelson autumns and the vineyard's free-draining clay-rich loams, not to mention hard pruning, hand-picking and sensitive vinification.

Having bought the former Ranzau winery in 1990, Andrew Greenhough and partner Jenny Wheeler expanded the vines to 11 hectares, ripping out the Müller Thurgau and the Cabernet Sauvignon – but the 30-year-old blocks of Riesling, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc are greatly prized.

Paton Rd, RD1, Hope,
ph: 03-542 3868, greenhough.co.nz
Cellar door Labour Weekend-Easter Sat-Sun 1pm-5pm; Jan 7 days

Neudorf Vineyards

One of the most picturesque wineries in the region, Neudorf's cluster of rustic buildings lie at the end of a silverbirch-lined driveway. In 2004, the new red winery building was erected in a style similar to the original buildings, only with some high-tech insulation hiding beneath the macrocarpa cladding.

Neudorf Moutere Chardonnay is justly famous, as are the Pinot Noirs and Rieslings. The Pinot Gris is pretty good, too.

Neudorf Rd, Upper Moutere,
ph: 03-543 2643, neudorf.co.nz
Cellar door 7 days 11am-5pm
(Jun-Aug Mon-Fri 10.30am-3pm)

Seifried Estate

One of the earliest Nelson wineries, and now the largest, Seifried has a grand cellar door to match. A sort of wooden hunting lodge-cum-castle, it has a restaurant attached, and also serves as a wedding and function venue. Founder Hermann Seifried was brought out from Austria to make apple wine in the 1970s, and has been in Nelson ever since. All three of his children are involved in the business.

Seifried's specialty is aromatic whites and there are three tiers: the exclusive, vintage-dependent Winemakers Collection, the main Seifried brand, and the cheaper, fruit-driven Old Coach Road label.

Cnr SH60 & Redwood Rd, Appleby,
ph: 03-544 5599, seifried.co.nz
Cellar door 7 days 10am-5pm

Te Mania

Te Mania lies at the start of the Nelson wine trail. Impressive double doors lead out from the tasting room to a lawn with a large shady walnut tree, where picnickers can relax. Established in 1990 by Jon and Cheryl Harrey, Te Mania remains a family-owned winery and over the years has won significant accolades for its wines, particularly the Reserve Pinot Noir, which was selected by Jancis Robinson as one of her top ten Pinots from New Zealand.

108 McShane Rd, Richmond,
ph: 03-544 7585, temaniawines.co.nz
Cellar door 7 days 10.30am-4.30pm
(winter Mon-Fri only)

Woollaston Estate

Along with the complex, earthy flagship Pinot Noir, Woollaston

Estate produces aromatic whites with verve and depth. But as good a reason as any to visit the cellar door is to see the extraordinary tussock-roofed winery, which uses gravity to slide grapes down three levels, from the de-stemmer, down to the fermentation vats and finally into the bottle.

The majority owner of Woollaston Estate, American businessman Glen Schaeffer, is an art collector who has established a gallery beside the tasting room and erected various sculptures around the estate.
243 Old Coach Rd, Upper Moutere, ph: 03-543 2817, woollaston.co.nz
Cellar door 7 days 11am-4.30pm

ACCOMMODATION

Te Puna Wai Lodge

Located high on the hills overlooking Nelson Haven, this elegant luxury lodge's view stretches away across Tasman Bay to the Mt Arthur ranges and Abel Tasman Park in the distance.

Built in classic high-Victorian "wedding cake" style, the lodge offers three distinctive suites. Perfect for relaxation, beautifully furnished, fine hospitality and quality cuisine.
124 Richardson St, Nelson, ph 03-548 7621, tepunawai.co.nz

The Honest Lawyer

A traditional, English-style country pub with 10 comfortable rooms upstairs, all with en suites, hosted by former Auckland restaurateur John Wheeler. Pub-style food.
1 Point Rd, Monaco, ph: 03-547 8850 or 0800-921 192, honestlawyer.co.nz

Villa 10 Waterfront Apartments

Two stylish, self-contained apartments on a lovely elevated site in the Port Hills, with Haulashore Island in the foreground and breath-taking views over Tasman Bay to the distant mountains.
10 Richardson St, ph: 03-548 4619, villa10.co.nz

Wakefield Quay House

Woodi and Johnny Moore's two-storeyed Victorian villa has a prime position on the Nelson waterfront. There are panoramic views from the two elegantly decorated en suite rooms, one of which has its own balcony. Hospitality includes casual drinks and hors d'oeuvres out on the deck and delicious breakfasts, using local products.
385 Wakefield Quay, ph: 03-546 7275, wakefieldquay.co.nz

Warwick House

Nelsonians have nicknamed this grand Victorian Gothic mansion, built in 1854 and complete with turret and slate roof, "The Castle". Three suites, including one in the octagonal tower, each with its private lounge or garden.
64 Brougham St, ph: 03-548 3164, warwickhouse.co.nz ✪



The view from Te Puna Wai Lodge across to Haulashore Island


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NEW WORLD WINE AWARDS 2010

restaurants

Edited by Toni Mason



KEN DOWNIE

Café Hanoi

Auckland

CAFÉ HANOI
★★★★
Excelsior Building,
cnr Commerce & Galway Sts, City,
ph: 09-302 3478
Mon-Fri 12pm to late, Sat 5pm to late
$$$





Café Hanoi and its poached chicken and Papaya Salad (left)

A virtual Vietnamese eating experience can now be had in Auckland, thanks to Café Hanoi in the Britomart precinct. On the ground floor of the heritage Excelsior building, it has been evocatively fitted out within the distressed walls with an assortment of wooden chairs painted red, a striking stand of bird of paradise and a cluster of rice-paper lightshades hanging from the high ceiling.

The design concept came from co-owner Tony McGeorge (co-owner of Ponsonby Social Club). He and partner Krishna Botica of Prego seem to have ransacked Ponsonby eateries to put together a top team of front-of-house staff. Chef Jason van Dorsten was also once a long-time chef at Prego before heading off for his OE, which included Vietnam. It seems he was hooked on the food and has returned several times to hone his skill. It shows. He may use a bit of licence but, working from a traditional base, produces vibrant Vietnamese flavours in modern form.

There are no bookings and it is invariably busy, but the long bar before the open kitchen is a perfect place to perch and start proceedings with sweet pickled shrimps flavoured with dill and coriander on open crisp-fried wontons, a great marriage of taste and texture.

Sharing is the way to go here. The dishes come accompanied by some condiments: sliced chilli, lime wedges and fish sauce (for salt). Don't go past the poached chicken and papaya salad. In the generous mount of julienned papaya, carrot and Vietnamese mint, topped with crunchy peanuts, you'll find the most juicy, flavoursome and deliciously textured chicken, with white and dark meats used, all in a tangy dressing that demands spooning up.

Beer-steamed cockles in a broth spiked with ginger, chilli, tamarind and loads of lively greenery hit the right note of pungency, with a fine balance of the sweet, salty, sour and hot flavours that form the cornerstone of the herbaceous cuisine.

The hotpot of caramelised pork belly with water spinach is a luxurious dish, vying for top spot on the menu with peppered soy shaking beef with just-sautéed red onion and watercress.

The wine list is designed to match the menu, with a good smattering of aromatics, both local and Alsatian, and the service bright and knowledgeable.

Desserts are a dream. Vietnam's ubiquitous coconut crème caramel – a lovely example of French fusion – is delicious here, with a silky texture and light and delightful dainty doughnut on the side. And a moulded sago pudding is set in a pool of white chocolate and yoghurt cream with a streak of palm sugar caramel that was so good, I had to comment when the plates were cleared. Chef, I was told, had worked at fine-tuning it to replicate what he'd had in Vietnam. He must be a chef who loves – as well as knows – what he's doing. Love his work. **TONI MASON**

CAFÉ HANOI, SUNDAY PAINTERS & RAGU, KEN DOWNIE



Sunday Painters co-owners James Kirkwood and Esther Lamb



Sunday Painters' Almond & Pear Tart

SUNDAY PAINTERS

★★★★

185 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby,
ph: 09-360 2001
Tues-Sat 5.30pm to late
$$$

An easel by the doorway announces Sunday Painters is open – a nice touch for a place with much artistic background. Inside, the welcoming room has a whimsical quality, with the painterly theme extending to the green walls with a botanical motif painted by co-owner and artist James Kirkwood. The chairs are covered with floral fabric and the banquettes are bolstered with plump cushions, adding to the homely ambience. With the tables full of chattering beau monde, it has the feel of the private parlour of a cultured and sociable society.

In fact, Sunday Painters had its first incarnation as a private-dining operation – "guerilla catering", as co-owner Esther Lamb describes it. She, Kirkwood, co-owner chef Isobel Thom and a group of friends, including writer Emily Perkins and her painter husband, Karl Maughan, staged private dinners at RSAs and other associations around the city, selling tickets to friends.

Perkins and Maughan are "spiritual shareholders" who helped with the painting and decorating, and sometimes Perkins waits on tables and Maughan helps out in the kitchen.

Long-time Ponsonby dwellers will remember Lamb from her restaurant Stella just down the road in the 90s, while this is Kirkwood's first foray into restaurants (not that you'd know it). He brings a specialised knowledge of wines – he works in a fine-wine shop by day – and presides over a list with a French tilt and some well-priced gems. There is a good range of wines by the glass. Plus, the rare option of BYO by arrangement for $25 corkage.

The bistro-style menu, handwritten and dotted with charming drawings (as is the wine list), lists simple, friendly dishes. Starters include nicely panfried scallops on a bed of rocket tossed with a lemony vinaigrette, and beautifully battered mussels topped with surprisingly good walnut sauce.

Comfort levels kick in with mains like fall-off-the-bone confit duck and potatoes "cubistes" – diced and sautéed with thinly sliced onion. Perfectly cooked fish of the day sits on a bed of fragrant fennel and is accompanied with tapenade.

The intriguing duck neck stuffed with pork is an old French recipe for a sausage made by forcing minced pork into the skin of a duck neck. Well seasoned and quite delicious, though a little dry, this comes with flavoursome Puy lentils. And winningly, they have a three-course prix fixe menu for $35.

Of the desserts, almond and pear tart was buttery perfection.

Put it down to experience or sheer artistry, but the friendly society behind Sunday Painters makes it look easy. Lucky for us we're all invited, now the moveable feast has parked up in Ponsonby. TONI MASON

RAGÙ

★★★

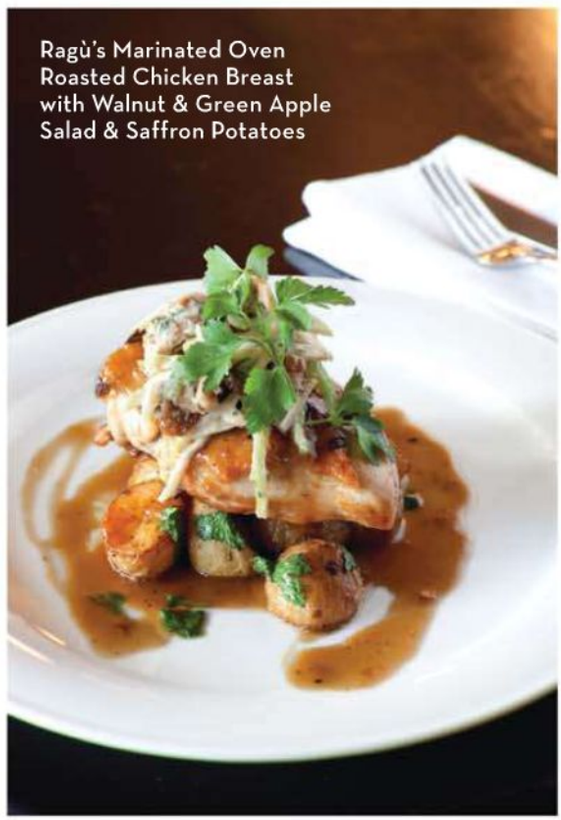
5 Pt Chevalier Rd, Pt Chevalier,
ph: 09-815 9595
Tues-Fri 4pm to late, Sat 12pm to late, Sun 12pm-9pm
$$$

News that this had been taken over by a trio of seasoned restaurateurs – Mandy Lusk of Vivace fame, her husband Eugene Gibson and business partner Steve McKenzie – piqued my curiosity so off I went, family in tow.

The previous restaurant had been disappointing. Now there is a more positive vibe, with Vivace-like private dining rooms, food in frames on the wall, good lighting and well-modulated music. And the layout, with the bar down one end and the dining area in a quieter space at the other, is much improved. Our service was friendly, helpful and well suited to the neighbourhood-bistro milieu the owners have created.

The menu has a Mediterranean theme and I opted for a selection of the tapas-style small plates, which were mostly good, but with a few miscues. The roasted spicy almonds and the crumbed squid (coated in unappetising dried dill) were overcooked, while the risotto balls lacked the flavour of the promised goat's cheese. However, the miso-cured pork belly was exquisite.

No problems at all with the boys' generous portions of fillet steak on



Ragù's Marinated Oven Roasted Chicken Breast with Walnut & Green Apple Salad & Saffron Potatoes

potato rösti, which came with an excellent red wine sauce, adding a smattering of Moroccan spice that gave the dish extra interest.

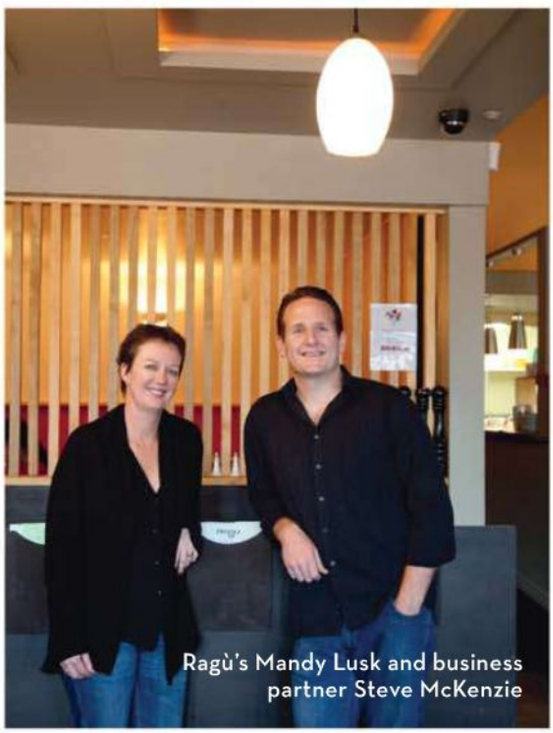
The chargrilled Toulouse sausages with creamy mash, onion gravy and wholegrain mustard, too, were excellent. Both dishes were perfectly cooked, well seasoned and showed a careful hand in the kitchen.

The dessert selection was fairly standard, with the point of difference being everyone from the landlord to the owner's mother had made a contribution to the list. The affogato was simply lovely, with a caramelly and creamy French vanilla ice-cream.

If you have ever been to Vivace you will know that the wine list is a strength and so it is at Ragù, with a great little list of local and international wines that has clearly been carefully put together to work with the Mediterranean feel of the menu. There are plenty of options by the glass including a mouth-watering selection of Rieslings from Alsace.

We will return to Ragù – there is plenty to recommend it, not least the way it caters for families, especially with its kids' playroom. It's an informal, value-for-money kind of place, perfectly pitched at the regular diner. While warm and comfortable on the cold night we visited, I suspect Ragù will really come into its own in summer when the French doors can all be opened to the expansive courtyard in front and the fun can really begin.

KERRY TYACK



Ragù's Mandy Lusk and business partner Steve McKenzie



Cobar

Wellington

COBAR

★★★½

612 Main Rd, Days Bay, cobar.co.nz
12pm to late 7 days (closed Mon April to November)
$$$

Until it changed hands 18 months ago, Cobar's sole claim to fame had been as an industry survivor: for 15 years a suburban plodder, its roast dinners and antiquated salad bar were curiously at odds with its modern architecture, which features floor-to-ceiling windows to maximise the panoramic view of Days Bay and Wellington Harbour beyond.

For reasons best known to themselves, Cobar's new owners have kept the name, despite having greatly upgraded both décor and menu. Swish new white-leather chairs have been installed, Dick Frizzell prints have been hung, the toilets have been renovated and the pink 1980s colour scheme toned down (though guests can now titter at a feature wall of kitsch flamingos).

Chef-patron Ryan Tattersall has cooked in posh English hotels, but is local (from Eastbourne) and understands the challenges of a suburban eatery. He's resigned to having his restaurant overflow with birthday parties over the weekend yet remain deserted midweek, despite there being few more pleasant places to dine on a still, sunny Wellington day than on the deck at Cobar, with the beach in front and the birdsong from the backdrop of native bush behind.

Main course prices have been capped at $29, again with the suburban market in mind, for such labour-intensive dishes would surely be priced nearer $40 in central Wellington.

There's the now-familiar pairing of prime and secondary cuts of meat, as in the beef fillet and braised shin, and Wharekauhau lamb with braised neck cannelloni, the cooked meat having been shredded and moistened with jus. Vegetable garnishes are equally as elaborate, such as carrot purée cooked sous-vide to retain both flavour and sweetness, pretty purple squares of crushed urenika potato, and roast mushrooms trimmed with a pastry cutter.

The mushroom trimmings are ground and mixed with cream to make an unusual cold entrée, mushroom custard, served with sweet, pickled mushroom and drizzled with a vinaigrette that sings with juiced fresh thyme. Scallop roes, so often wasted by chefs, are here made into a sort of fish cake to accompany the scallops themselves, which are given a subtle zing with a quenelle of finely chopped chorizo "jam".

Rhubarb tarte Tatin does not caramelise as well as the classic apple, but looks the part, complemented with rhubarb sorbet on a bed of fine mint crumble, circled by milk jam (similar in flavour and texture to condensed milk).

The service is charming and the wine list inviting. Tuesdays are BYO and by any standards, Cobar is a bargain.

DAVID BURTON

RAGÙ: KEN DOWNIE; COBAR: MAARTEN HOLL/DOMINION POST/FAIFAX; FOXGLOVE: RICHARD HARVEY

FOXGLOVE
★★★★
Queens Wharf, 57 Customhouse Quay, ph: 04-460 9410, foxglovebar.co.nz
7 days lunch to late
$$$


Foxglove

Try getting a table at Foxglove on a Friday night and you will be left in no doubt that this waterfront bar is Wellington's new place to be. Done out like a cosy members-only club, with faux hunting trophies and shelves filled with board games and vinyl albums, Foxglove's dining area and three bars sprawl over two floors. Panelling, tiling and a floor-to-ceiling wall of living ferns all shriek big bucks, as does the already famous Narnia wardrobe entrance through to the cocktail bar; the place now looks a million dollars, as it jolly well ought, since that was the cost of the conversion from The Loaded Hog.

Prior to the Hog, as The Greta Point Tavern and then Salt, this much rearranged heritage warehouse had sprouted a pair of bogus cupolas and been barged around in 12 pieces to Queens Wharf from Greta Point, having begun life in the late 19th century much less grandly, as the laundry and linen store of the Union Steamship Company.

Few raw-fisted laundry workers are to be seen in Foxglove these days. Gone, too, are the Hog's loaded backpackers, rugby heads and assorted floozies. Significantly, Foxglove doesn't offer a single RTD to suck on. The cocktails are formidable and the wine list bulges with Champagnes.

Designating itself a "bar and kitchen", Foxglove weights its menu heavily towards snacks to accompany drinks. It's totally feasible to make a meal from the 21-strong selection of small plates, indeed advisable for those who don't favour fish or beef, wagyu beef and more hearty beef – grain and grass-fed.

The "24hr Beef Cheek" only just holds together. A great meaty log of moist strings, it rests upon truffle-scented braising juices, sharpened beautifully at the last minute with a lemony gremolata.

Having worked for Simon Gault at nearby Shed Five, executive chef Glen Taylor has added a whimsical molecular string to his bow. His chefs huddle with syringes in their kitchen laboratory, turning out bubbles and foams, which, for once, do actually taste of something. Popping the bubbly "air" atop the snapper sashimi against the roof of your mouth, there's a split-second blast of intense ginger, which causes you to cough.

"It's Harry Potter food!" I said to the women at the next table who'd been chuckling at my ordeal. Served with mango and apple salad, and fringed with soy mirin pearls, the dish combined the now-familiar, much-loved Asian flavour palette – sweet, sour and salty.

There were traces, too, of the old East-meets-West, as in the "sesame miso aïoli" – bold and salty – which accompanied the pork and duck spring rolls. The two meats were finely minced and melded in the same way as pork and shrimp in a Cantonese dim sum, leaving you delightfully unsure as to where one flavour ends and the other begins.

"Wagyu Bresaola, Cabernet Pear, Prosciutto di Parma, Jamón Serrano, Ciabatta" allows you to decide for yourself whether Italy or Spain produces the world's best air-dried ham (as much as I loved the complexity of the Parma ham, the unctuous, slippery textured jamón won).

The waiting staff, apparently hired on the basis of youth and looks, are generally competent. The hip-hop soundtrack is bound to grate, but in warm weather at least the curmudgeonly smokers can escape to the comfortable deck seating on both floors.

DAVID BURTON

Christchurch

ANNIES WINE BAR & RESTAURANT
★★★
Arts Centre, Hereford St, ph: 03-365 0566, annieswinebar.co.nz
7 days lunch and dinner
$$$$

Suddenly the room falls silent. A rumble and a bang, tables rock, glasses clatter. And then it's over.

Weeks after the big quake, dining out in Christchurch can still be a bumpy experience. But Annies, lodged in the southern quadrant of the gothic Arts Centre, isn't a bad place to be stoic. It may be surrounded by cordoned-off dodgy areas, but the restaurant is sound. In fact, it's safer in here than out there, the maître d'/sommelier nods to the dark courtyard. We get it. Out there some pointy heritage thing might fly off an ornate roof and impale us Exorcist style.

In the historic former university site, Annies' décor is English-country-squire dining hall – burnished pots, exposed bricks and beams, and leather-covered menus. It conjures visions of venison haunches, but in fact the menu is rather more sophisticated.

It's a Euro line-up with some unusual tweaks. Cullen skink, the Scottish smoked-fish chowder, lurks among the entrées. Blue cheese and mushroom cannelloni, with sage-buttered leeks and



Annies

tarragon sauce, promises a wild palette of flavours in the vegetarian main.

Our picks from the entrées were the green pea "fondants" with a shallot jam, crème fraîche and kumara crisps; and a confit duck leg terrine. The intriguing pea croquettes were the easy winner; the small and pricy terrine ($22) was served too chilled and lacked flavour. Worse, the only accompaniment, a spicy beetroot chutney, was also bland.

From the mains, the beef fillet with kumara dauphinoise, a cauliflower purée and port jus was a sophisticated and successful take on the standard restaurant dish. The medium-rare beef came closer to the rare end of the scale and was all the better for it.

A bolder choice was rabbit three ways. Shredded foreleg meat filled small tortellini, there was a pancetta-wrapped loin and the highlight, a falling-apart confit hind leg, had all the flavour the duck terrine lacked. Just about stealing the show were the Puy lentils, brought to life with a dash of sherry vinegar. Rabbit and a Central Otago Pinot Noir was an obvious but glorious match – a big full-flavoured Michelle Richardson, the bunny and the earthy lentils.

For dessert, a dark chocolate pudding with white-chocolate ice-cream nicely achieved the bittersweet hit and whisky-soaked figs added an interesting twist to the crème brûlée.

The secret weapon here is a spectacular wine list – it includes a Grange and a Bordeaux first growth.

Annies has a kitchen that's not afraid to innovate and loyal diners who are willing to wobble while they enjoy themselves. **EWAN SARGENT**

Moeraki

FLEUR'S PLACE
★★★★
The Old Jetty, Moeraki,
ph: 03-439 4480, fleursplace.com
Wed-Sun 10.30am to late
$$$$

Since Fleur Sullivan opened her restaurant in the fishing village of Moeraki on the Otago coast eight years ago, it has gained an international reputation, with such luminaries as Rick Stein making the pilgrimage to eat there. The attraction, as Fleur has said many times, is the fishing boats.

Each day, the boats come in and, if you are there at the right time, you can see the crates of fish being landed on the wharf and carried straight up to the restaurant. For those who worship at the shrine of fresh and local it's a thrilling sight – paradoxically, Fleur had to go through a rigmarole of regulations to allow her to source her fish so fresh. Vegetables, cheeses and most other ingredients also come from nearby, and wild foods, such as elderflower, mushrooms and seaweed also feature.

But seafood dominates the menu: on the blackboard is a helpful list of the fish landed that morning or the previous evening – maybe blue cod, moki, gurnard, tarakihi and flat fish like brill, sole and flounder. The fish is simply cooked and comes in large, southern-sized servings. You can also order a kaimoana platter with a range of fresh and smoked fishy titbits such as eel and kina or mutton-birds (titi), harvested by Maori on the Titi Islands around Stewart Island.

One of Fleur's signature dishes well worth trying is blue cod wrapped in savoury home-smoked bacon. Another is the rich seafood chowder with queen scallops from off the coast, cockles from Blueskin Bay, mussels and white fish. And, if you can pass over the fish, her venison, rabbit and pickled walnut pie, a legacy from her days at Olivers in Clyde, Central Otago, is delicious with a glass of Emerson's Bookbinder ale.

The wine list is mainly local – Central Otago and Waitaki Valley – with a few bigger reds from further north. Fleur, now in her 70s, still works the floor, greeting people, chatting, talking on the phone and clearing tables, her trouser hems still wet from picking herbs that morning.





Fleur Sullivan of Fleur's Place

First-time visitors are often surprised to find Fleur's Place is a shiny new corrugated-iron shed, but, apart from the cladding, it is built mostly from a recycled barn. Fleur's sense of style, her antique crockery and cutlery, and of course the food, justify the enviable reputation her place has gained.
CHARMIAN SMITH

RATINGS GUIDE

The ratings reflect the reviewers' experience of food, wine, ambience and service, with food given the most weight. We include restaurants that provide a reasonable experience in all or most of these areas and do not feature any restaurant that would score no stars as we regard these as less than satisfactory.

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ANNIES, STEPHEN GOODENOUGH; FLEUR'S PLACE, SHARRON BENNETT

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SIEM REAP We regularly dine at Siem Reap Restaurant in Wellington and always come away satisfied. We can't resist ordering the mouth-watering stuffed baby squid and would love to know how they do it. Can you please ask them for the recipe?
Steve McBride
Via email

Siem Reap has a loyal following in Wellington (99 Dixon St, Te Aro, ph: 04-385 4590) and chef Pheng Eng was happy to pass along this recipe, which is served as a starter on their menu.



STUFFED BABY SQUID
SERVES 6-8

1 tablespoon fish sauce
3 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
25g bean thread noodles (cellophane vermicelli)
350g cooked chicken mince (about 400g raw mince, fried in 2 tablespoons olive oil)
1 onion, finely chopped
50g water chestnuts, finely chopped
2 kaffir lime leaves, finely chopped and central stalk discarded
1 tablespoon finely chopped lemongrass
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
2 tablespoons finely chopped peanuts
1½ tablespoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
16 baby squid
canola oil for frying
coriander leaves to garnish

Make a sauce by placing the fish sauce, sweet chilli sauce and garlic in a small bowl and mixing well. Set aside.

In a bowl, pour boiling water over the bean thread noodles and leave for 3 minutes. Drain and cool under cold water. Chop the noodles into small pieces and place in a large bowl with the chicken, onion, water chestnuts, lime leaves, lemongrass, turmeric, peanuts, sugar and salt.

Using your fingers, stuff each squid with the chicken mixture, packing it in firmly. Leave a little gap at the end and secure with a toothpick so the filling doesn't spill out during cooking.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Heat some oil in a medium frying pan and fry the squid for 30 seconds each side then transfer to the oven and cook for 3-4 minutes. Remove from the oven and place on a hot chargrill and cook until nicely browned. Serve whole, garnished with coriander and drizzled with the sauce.

HUHU CAFÉ in Waitomo makes a cheese scone with red pepper relish and it is amazing. I would love it if I could get the secret recipe.
Ann Reed
Via email

Andy Rawles, head chef at Huhu Café (10 Waitomo Caves Rd, Waitomo, ph: 07-878 6674), provided the delicious cheese scone recipe.

CHEESE SCONES WITH RED PEPPER RELISH
MAKES 6-7 LARGE SCONES OR 12 SMALL

2 tablespoons olive oil
3 onions, sliced
680g jar roasted red peppers, drained and sliced (we used Golden Sun)
½ cup white wine vinegar
½ cup sugar
3 cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 tablespoon sugar
½ tablespoon salt
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
3 cups grated tasty cheese
300ml milk

For the relish, heat the oil in a medium saucepan and add the onions. Fry until soft then add the peppers and cook for another 10 minutes. Add the vinegar and sugar, and cook until the liquid has mostly evaporated (15-20 minutes). Set aside.

For the scones, preheat the oven to 200°C. Sift together the dry ingredients into a large bowl then add the cheese. Add the milk bit by bit, stirring gently without overmixing. Roll out on a floured surface into a long rectangle, spread the relish along the middle and roll one long side over the other. Cut into the desired size. Place on a baking tray lined with a silicone sheet or baking paper and cook for 15 minutes or until golden.

Enjoy with lashings of butter! ✪

Correction: In our last issue, an ingredient was inadvertently left out of the recipe for Pukeko Junction Café's lemon slice. The topping should have included ⅓ cup flour. We apologise for the error.


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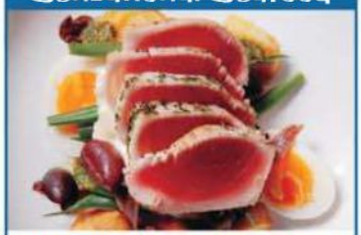
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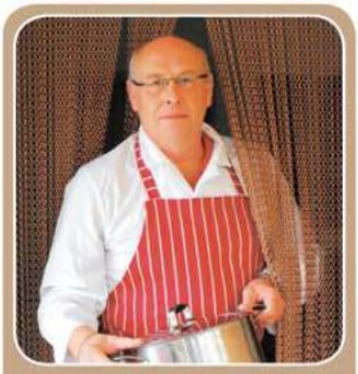
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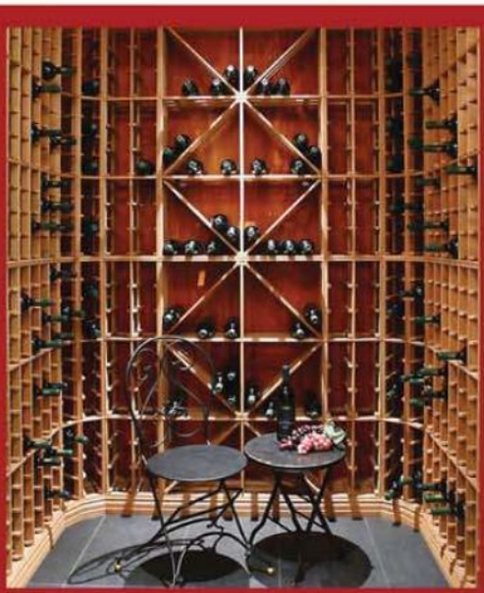
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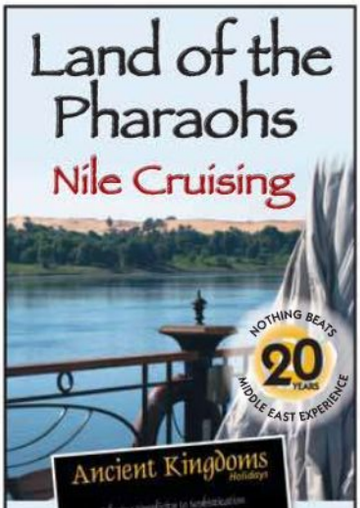
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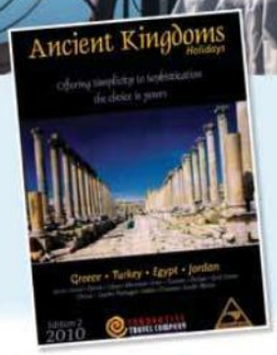
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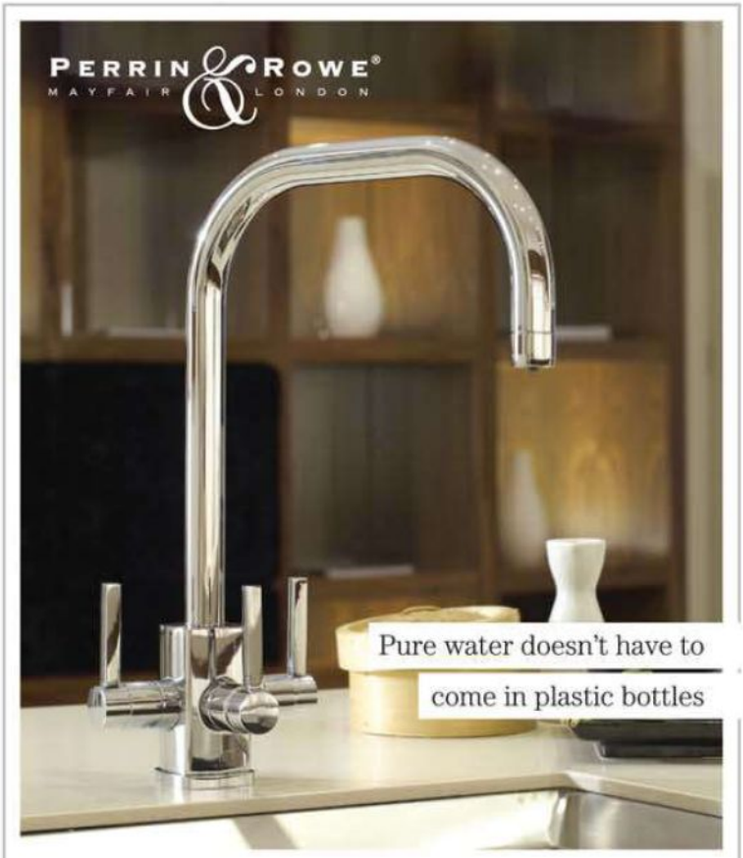
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Bob Steiner Ceramics steinerceramics.co.nz
Ciroa ciroahomewares.com
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Maxwell & Williams maxwellandwilliams.com
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Republic Home, republichome.com
Smith & Caughey smithandcaughey.co.nz
The Studio of Tableware thestudio.co.nz
Wheel and Barrow wheelandbarrow.com.au

QUICK SMART page 40
Decorative ceramic plate and platter, La Chamba dish, red placemat, red denim napkin and green tumbler (French Country Collections).

FÊTE MODERN page 58
Jasper Conran White and Jasper Conran Chinoiserie White Wedgwood plates and Jasper Conran Strata tumblers (Smith & Caughey); Christofle Origine Polish cutlery, Paul Wirths Swing Matt forks, Nactmann Havanna dessert glasses, Spiegelau Adina Prestige Champagne flutes, Bordeaux and Multi-Purpose glassware, WMF decanter, Spiegelau seafood cocktail set and L&M Hemstitch napkins (The Studio of Tableware); silver beads (French Country Collections).

PLATS DU JOUR page 66
Turin round and rectangular platter, Hansen large platter, Elsham platter, Novak vase and Spin tumbler (Country Road); wooden table and ceramic bowls (Republic Home); pewter and glass bowl, checked scarf and silver placemat (Citta Design); antique crystal glasses, decanter, carving sets and patterned plates (Antiques of Epsom); glass door handles, wooden beads and French linen tablecloth (Madder & Rouge).

THE LAST TEMPTATION page 76
Silver candelabra, white ceramic plate, silver cake stand, beads and other Christmas decorations (French Country Collections); Normann Copenhagen lampshade (Design Denmark); metallic wallpaper (Netti & Gee); Spiegelau Diamonds bowl, Christofle Element & Origine Matt cutlery, Rosenthal Vibrations plate, Bernardaud Dune plate, Thomas Medallion plate and Rosenthal Vibrations silver vase (The Studio of Tableware); Bond cutlery (Nest).

MISSION STATEMENT page 84
Handmade ceramic plates, bottles, salt dish, tumblers and jugs (Bob Steiner Ceramics); charcoal tumblers and amber tealight holder (Nood); Cutipol Ebony cutlery, salt and pepper shakers, Zassenhaus Berlin salt grinder, iittala dinner plates and iittala Kartio pitcher (The Studio of Tableware); ceramic decorative plate (Artedomus).

TABLE FOR EIGHT page 92
London jug, Asti blue highball glasses, yellow glass tealight holders and blue ceramic platter (Country Road); Coco plates, Providore cutlery, LSA glass tealight holder and Open Up stemware (Nest).

DUTY-FREE DINING page 102
White plate (with bresaola and pickled fish) and dessert bowl (Nest); cutlery (Ciroa); wooden tray (Country Road); dinner plates (for the steak), blue dipping bowl and small white bowl (Mud Australia); small bowl and cheese knife (Maxwell & Williams); white napkin (David Jones); small plate (Wheel and Barrow).

COURSE YOU CAN DO IT page 108
Cutlery (Antiques of Epsom). ✪



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AARON McLEAN

terms of incensement

Some culinary words leave a bad taste in **Tom Parker Bowles'** mouth



Foodie. Roll the word around your mouth. Feel those soft, doughy curves. Then spit it the hell out. Because this is one of the foulest words in the English language, at once smug, cloying and deeply naff. Once upon a time, back in the British gastronomic darkness of 1982, to be a "foodie" was to be part of a civilised club, a small underground band who knew their *Michelin* from their *Gault Millau*, a tribe who lived to eat rather than ate to live.

The word was first coined by Ann Barr and Paul Levy in an article in *Harper's and Queen* entitled "Cuisine Poseur". A book, *The Official Foodie Handbook*, soon followed and it's still an essential text, with everything from "The History of Foodism" to illustrated instructions on executing the Heimlich manoeuvre in a restaurant.

Nowadays, though, the word has plummeted from its once lofty perch, debased by chronic overuse and more a term of abuse than of endearment. For me, a "foodie" is someone obsessed with truffle oil and silver service, a self-conscious bore more interested in box ticking and one-upmanship ("I've done El Bulli, Noma and French Laundry, so now I can rest easy") than the true pleasures of the table.

Because one of the problems of writing about food is the limitations of gustatory vocabulary. There are only so many ways of describing "delicious". Find a really filthy dinner, though, and a whole dictionary of disgust spreads out before you. That's why the more acerbic, coruscating reviews by the likes of AA Gill tend to stick in the mind rather longer than the raves. Still, there are a few words that should be avoided at all costs when talking about food. My list is by no means exhaustive. But like a chicken bone or great lump of gristle, they tend to stick horribly in the throat.

"Tasty" is up there with "foodie" for a truly gross and insipid word. What in God's name does it mean? That a certain food item possesses taste? Even water has taste. Even microwave lasagne has taste. What are you getting at? As lazy as it is twee and trite, it's descriptive writing for the journalistically challenged. See this in an article about food and run for the hills.

Then there's "moist". Okay, so it's not up there with the previous two villains, but I just can't bear the word. For me, it has pornographic overtones quite unsuited to the culinary world. The problem comes in finding something suitably synonymous. Succulence, fine word as it is, doesn't quite cut it, while fecund overeggs the cake. Dank is negative, along with soggy. I realise I'm not being much help here. But ban "moist" and I'm certain a suitable replacement will appear, one day.

The modern restaurant menu is another place where a good mood can be transformed, in a mere sweep of a sentence, to an all-encompassing rage. Take the steak. I like to know which cut, of course. The breed is interesting, but not essential, as is the period of hanging. But all I really care about is the eating. Does it taste good? The rest is moot. In any decent restaurant, I trust the cook to choose the finest meat he can find. I don't care that Daisy led a happy life in buttercup-filled fields. Or that her favourite colour is pink. And that the farmer's name is John. Some of the best restaurants I know just list "rump steak" or "New York strip", without all the marketing hype. Flavour matters, not endless purple prose.

"Panfried" is another bête noire, as if the fact it's fried in the pan, rather than the deep-fat-fryer, makes it somehow bourgeois and snootily middle class. "Yes, that cod is deep-fried in some ghastly machine. Whereas our sea bass is panfried with 'vine-ripened' tomatoes (uh, duh... where else do tomatoes ripen? On washing lines?) and a balsamic reduction." It's just verbal fluffing, the art of making a menu seem far grander and more sophisticated than it really is.

The same applies for "jus" rather than gravy in non-French restaurants, or any superfluous adjective (chef's "superb" soufflé, a "dazzling" seafood medley or "our world-famous" burger) on the menu. Or a heading at the top of the page: For Your Delectation. I could go on and on. "Complementary beverages" fill me with corporate-induced gloom. And any pudding that needs a gag or exclamation mark to prove its worth – Death by Chocolate! Naughty but Nice! – deserves to be taken outside and shot through the back of the head.

They're just words, I hear you cry. Why the anger and aggression? Because they're hollow words. This is food as artifice, pretension standing in for passion, glibness over true glory. In short, these are words designed to appeal to the vapid sensibilities of the "foodie" rather than the serious eater. And for that reason alone, they should be consigned to the scrap bin for ever. ✪

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